

**AUSTRALIAN WINE  
MADE OUR WAY**

# **AUSTRALIA'S ALTERNATIVE VARIETIES**

**FACILITATOR GUIDE**



**AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED**

# AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED

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**AUSTRALIAN WINE  
MADE OUR WAY**

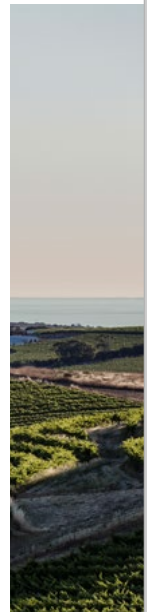
# **A U S T R A L I A ' S A L T E R N A T I V E V A R I E T I E S**



## **AUSTRALIAN WINE MADE OUR WAY**



Australia's unique climate and landscape have fostered a fiercely independent wine scene, home to a vibrant community of growers, winemakers, viticulturists, and vignerons. With more than 100 grape varieties grown across 65 distinct wine regions, we have the freedom to make exceptional wine, and to do it our own way. We're not beholden by tradition, but continue to push the boundaries in the pursuit of the most diverse, thrilling wines in the world. That's just our way.





# AS DIVERSE AS THE COUNTRY THAT MADE THEM

Australia grows more than 100 different grape varieties in 65 wine regions, and our passions extend to 'alternative' varieties well-suited to our lifestyle and warm climate. Our imagination and curiosity have led to the success of many Southern Mediterranean varieties, and each year emerging varieties are increasing due to the great suitability of growing these alternative grapes in Australia.

## **AUSTRALIA'S ALTERNATIVE VARIETIES**

Australia has one of the most diverse wine scenes in the world. With over 100 different grape varieties grown across 65 wine regions, our wines are an expression of our distinctive terroirs and the vibrant communities that cultivate them.

The evolution of Australian wine can be seen through the abundance of varieties: a wide spectrum of styles ranging from rogue to refined, classic to contemporary. Australians have always made great Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, Riesling, Grenache and Semillon, but our passions extend to 'alternative' varieties well-suited to our warm climate, including varieties like Fiano, Nero d'Avola, Sangiovese and Tempranillo.

Our imagination and curiosity have led to the success of many Southern Mediterranean varieties. While alternative varieties account for a small percentage of Australia's wine-producing vineyards, the number is increasing due to how well-suited they are to the country's lifestyle, food and climate.

There's freedom, creativity and a desire for excellence in the Australian wine community. And one of the most deeply rooted changes is happening from the ground up, with new and exciting alternative grape varieties thriving all over the country.



## WHAT IS AN 'ALTERNATIVE' VARIETY?



'Alternative' varieties are simply grape varieties that are not part of the mainstream varieties planted across Australia.

TODAY

WE'LL

COVER...

- The history of alternative varieties
- Introducing new varieties into Australia
- Reasons behind the rise of alternative varieties
- Leading alternative varieties in Australia, including regions, styles and producers



## THE HISTORY OF ALTERNATIVE VARIETIES IN AUSTRALIA

### EARLY-MID 1900s

As enquiring winemakers tried their luck at growing grapes and making wine, the general direction flowed towards production of the traditional French varieties and fortified wines.



### 1868

Henry Best plants Dolcetto which will become potentially the world's oldest ungrafted vines of this variety in the world.

### LATE 1900s

Winemakers' interest in alternative varieties begins to take off, with the first commercial planting of Viognier taking place in 1980 in Yalumba's Eden Valley Vaughan Vineyard. Brown Brothers supports varietal diversity with the establishment of Mystic Park Vineyard, planting alternative varieties such as Sylvaner, Traminer and more.

## THE HISTORY OF ALTERNATIVE VARIETIES IN AUSTRALIA

Despite the current boom in emerging varieties, it's worth noting that alternative varieties have been thriving in our diverse, distinctive terroirs for decades – in some cases even longer. It all started when James Busby arrived in Australia with a diverse range of alternative varieties that included Marsanne and Pinot Blanc.

### 1868

One of the oldest alternative varieties is still thriving in Victoria's Great Western at Best's Wines. Its old-vine ungrafted Dolcetto was planted in 1868, when Henry Best purchased 30 hectares of land in Victoria's Grampians region. Along with Shiraz and Pinot Meunier, Best planted the Italian variety Dolcetto on his Concongella estate. Translated from Italian to mean "sweet little one", Dolcetto was originally from Piedmont in northwest Italy, which is still considered

its spiritual home. It's very likely that Best's original plantings of Dolcetto are the oldest ungrafted vines of this variety in the world. In Great Western, this early-ripening variety has stood the test of time and weathered many a storm (and a drought or two) since it was planted 150 years ago. Today it's crafted as a light to medium-bodied red. It's brightly coloured with lifted aromas of perfumed cherry, anise and savoury herbs. On the palate, it displays juicy black-cherry flavours with fine powdery tannins and a savoury finish.

### Early-mid 1900s

Throughout the 1900s, curious winemakers experimented with all kinds of varieties, but the overarching focus of the industry was on the traditional French stalwarts and fortified wines. That was until the success of Australian table wine kicked in towards the closing decades of the century, with European migration, dominated by

# 1985

Coriole in McLaren Vale plants a Sangiovese vineyard, becoming one of the first Australian wineries to experiment with the variety. Despite several hurdles, it becomes one of Australia's most successful alternative varieties.



# TODAY

Innovation and experimentation drives winemakers to bring alternative varieties onto the popular wine stage, with consumer thirst for something creative and 'new'.

# 2000s

The alternative varietal movement gains pace in the early 2000s, with grapes like Viognier and Pinot Gris/Grigio becoming common wine styles.



Italian immigrants, helping to shape the culture of Australian wine as we see it today. From that point on, experimentation became a defining aspect of the Australian wine community.

## 1968

Brown Brothers winery, based in north-east Victoria's King Valley region, is one of Australia's most innovative and continuously producing wineries, and its story began back in 1889. Varietal diversity has always been the backbone of the success of this family-run winery. After a severe frost destroyed the complete 1968 vintage, the family purchased a 32-hectare property in the Murray Valley and planted a sea of alternative varieties for the time.

## 1980s

Fast-forward to the late 20th century, and winemakers' commitment and enthusiasm for experimentation with alternative varieties really took off.

In South Australia, the first commercial planting of Viognier occurred in 1980 at Yalumba's Eden Valley Vaughan Vineyard, and now this winery is considered one of the world's most influential producers of this variety, in line with estates in its home in France's northern Rhône valley.

## 1985–2010

In the year 2000, the Chalmers family began producing their own wines – despite their viticultural story dating back to the 1970s. They imported over 70 Italian grape varieties to Australia in an effort to produce wines of optimum quality despite the warmer, drier growing conditions.

Coriole in McLaren Vale has always been a champion of alternative varieties, with a great interest in finding new and interesting wines for the Australian table, beginning with its Sangiovese vineyard planted in 1985, its Fiano vineyard in 2001 and its Piquepoul vineyard planted in 2010.

In fact, so dynamic is the pace of the alternative variety industry that grapes previously considered 'alternative', such as Viognier, are now gearing up to become mainstream.

### **Today**

The spirit of experimentation has been alive and kicking since the first colonial vigneron planted vines in the 1800s, but it's only now there is a commercial appetite for these alternative varieties. The combination of creative winemakers and a thirst for something 'new' from consumers means making wine from alternative varieties is now a sensible business decision.



### **SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINT**

Much of the impetus to plant and craft alternative varieties in Australia has been encouraged by the influence of immigration to our country. Would so many Italian varieties have flourished here if the consumer demand was not so strong?





# INTRODUCING A NEW VARIETY INTO AUSTRALIA

It can take several years before a new variety flourishes in a new home, starting with quarantine and propagation. And tough questions still need to be answered once the fruit can be made into wine:

- How suitable is the region's climate and soils?
- Does this particular clone cope with inherent conditions of the region?
- Does the aspect of the vineyard maximise daylight and nighttime temperature fluctuations for this variety?
- How does the wine taste once crafted by the winemaker?

## INTRODUCING A NEW VARIETY INTO AUSTRALIA

Persistence and patience are required when it comes to introducing varieties to foreign soil. Once a variety is imported to Australia, it undergoes several years of tests and trials before it's planted in any real quantity or begins to flourish. The first obstacle is making its way through quarantine – the cuttings spend up to two years in isolation, confirming its health and ruling out potentially harmful diseases. The second obstacle is propagation. The cuttings are planted in the vineyard, usually a specially created nursery-style zone where these young vines can establish themselves before bearing fruit capable of use in winemaking trials.

Winemakers then need to undertake a series of trials in order to assess the viability of this new variety for their unique climate and terroir. Does the variety suit the region's climate and soils? Does this particular clone cope with frost that may be inherent in the region? Does the aspect of the vineyard maximise daylight and nighttime temperature fluctuations for this variety?

What's clear, and often the most exciting part of establishing a new variety, is that the Australian expression of the imported variety displays all kinds of distinctions and nuances that are particular to its new region and different to that of its original home. This is due in large part to the winemaker's experience, but also their willingness to experiment with new techniques – both in the vineyard and in the winery.



**FUN FACT**

# BRAND-NEW WINE GRAPES

Australia's independent scientific research body, the CSIRO (Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation), has created brand-new wine varieties that are suited to Australia's growing conditions:

- Cienna
- Tarrango
- Mystique
- Rubienne
- Taminga
- Tyrian

## **FUN FACT**

### **BRAND-NEW WINE GRAPES**

Australia's independent scientific research body, the CSIRO, has created brand-new wine varieties that are better suited to Australia's growing conditions. They include:

- Cienna.
- Tarrango.
- Mystique.
- Rubienne.
- Taminga.
- Tyrian.

However, despite Brown Brothers' Cienna and Tarrango varieties enjoying commercial success, both in the Australian market and abroad, there has been little to no uptake in other vineyards planting these varieties.

Success, in this case, can be measured in the science of developing these new varieties, and in particular how most of these varieties are resistant to powdery and downy mildew, a costly and widespread problem for the wine industry.



# WHY ARE ALTERNATIVE VARIETIES THRIVING IN AUSTRALIA?

## THE RISE OF ALTERNATIVE VARIETIES IN AUSTRALIA

So we know that alternative varieties are emerging across the country, but what's driving this rise?

# INNATE SENSE OF INNOVATION

Creativity and curiosity have driven growers and winemakers to experiment with new varieties.



## INNATE SENSE OF INNOVATION

The first reason is undoubtedly Australia's fierce desire to embrace the new and its aversion to resting on its laurels. Creativity and experimentation are almost essential skills for the Australian winemaker of today. Nowhere is this yearning for innovation more acute than within the wine community. Its members have always looked for ways to evolve, to adapt to the changing demands of Australian consumers, whose dining habits and bold experimentation have always kept them on their toes. Consumers are moving away from ordering the first

Chardonnay on the restaurant wine list – it's now more common to see diners ask a sommelier to try something new – say a Gewürztraminer or a Gamay. Add to this curiosity the fact that our multicultural population is becoming even more diverse, with Australian growers feeling confident to plant the Italian Nero d'Avola grape, winemakers yearning to craft the Austrian grape Grüner Veltliner, and vignerons dipping into Greek winemaking history by planting Assyrtiko.



# CLIMATE CHANGE

Increasing temperatures and dry spells create a need for new varieties and modern techniques that better suit these conditions.



## CLIMATE CHANGE

With many of Australia's classic wine regions boasting warmer and drier conditions, and with particular regions' growing seasons becoming shorter, quality-conscious winemakers are exploring the option of planting vines that are better suited to the new growing environment. On top of all this, the wine industry as a whole is looking to adopt sustainable viticultural practices, including planting vines that require less water as access to natural water sources becomes more challenging. The argument for planting new varieties has become far more compelling from a climatic viewpoint.



# GLOBALISATION OF WINE

Inspired by new varieties from all over the world, creative winemakers are innovating with their own insights and influences to produce premium wines.

## GLOBALISATION OF WINE

A third reason is commercial necessity, driven by the globalisation of wine. Throughout the 1980s and '90s, the world enjoyed a love affair with Australian Chardonnay and Shiraz. Big, bold and brassy flavours and characters attracted wine lovers everywhere. In line with the emergence of new winemaking countries, from Argentina to Zimbabwe, and a rise in importation of other nations' interesting wine styles, Australia has taken to crafting premium wines of exceptional, world-class quality – a necessity to quench the thirsts of discerning consumers. Yes, the big, bold Barossa reds are still high on the list for many wine lovers, but consumers are also willing to challenge convention – and Australian winemakers are meeting that demand by creating wines with a strong focus on freshness, balance and unique regional distinctions.

Australian winemakers have always crafted wine with a pioneering spirit, and now with many of our own winemakers gaining experience in the world's winemaking arena, influences from other regions are revealing themselves in wines crafted in our own backyard.

### SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

- How does the recent focus on sustainable winemaking practices feed into the desire to create alternative varieties?
- Are other wine-producing nations facing similar pressure points to those Australia is facing?



AUSTRALIA'S

# NOTABLE ALTERNATIVE VARIETIES

## TIME TO TASTE

NOW IS AN APPROPRIATE  
TIME TO TASTE AND  
DISCUSS YOUR SELECTED  
MIX OF WINES.

# VERMENTINO

**PLANTED IN ITALY'S LIGURIA REGION, SARDINIA AND CORSICA**

**SIMILAR BODY**  
and firm acid profile to Sauvignon Blanc; similar crisp texture to Pinot Grigio

Sauvignon Blanc drinkers love its dry body, acidity and food friendliness

**STYLES**

- Delicate nose and long, fresh palate
- Doesn't need oak treatment to boost its flavours or fill out its palate
- Ranges from fresh to textural

**FOOD PAIRING**

- Styles with more weight and texture make a good match for medium-weight dishes
- Can stand up to rich fish, other seafood and white meats

*THRIVES IN THE WARMTH OF McLAREN VALE WITH ITS PROXIMITY TO THE COAST - SIMILAR TO THE LIGURIA REGION*

VERMENTINO

## VERMENTINO

Vermentino is widely planted in Italy's Liguria region and the Mediterranean islands of Sardinia and Corsica. Its light to medium body and firm, natural acidity makes Vermentino somewhat similar to Sauvignon Blanc, while its crisp texture draws comparisons to Pinot Grigio. It's slowly increasing in popularity, as consumers (especially Sauvignon Blanc drinkers) come to love its light, dry body, firm acidity and food friendliness. Its popularity can be measured by the fact that since 2009, the Australian Alternative Varieties Wine Show (AAVWS) has introduced a singular class for the judging of Vermentino, moving from the "Other Whites" class.

## Where is Vermentino grown?

Vermentino loves the warm Mediterranean-style climate of McLaren Vale with its proximity to the coast – it's very similar to the environment around Liguria. But given it's a resilient variety, it's also been thriving in South Australia's Riverland region, NSW's Hunter Valley and the King Valley in Victoria. The variation of these growing conditions, from warmer to moderate, informs different styles of Vermentino, from light to rich.

## Styles of Vermentino

The appeal of Australian Vermentino lies in its delicate nose and long, fresh palate. The appeal for winemakers is that it's not crying out for oak treatment to boost its flavours or fill out its palate. It can be made in March, and bottled in late spring the same year to be appreciated over the long summer months. Styles range from fresh to textural. On the palate, expect notes of almond, lime, grapefruit, green apple and a typical 'sea spray' note.



# GRÜNER VELTLINER

**AUSTRIA'S MOST PLANTED VARIETY**

**CLONES WERE IMPORTED FROM AUSTRIA BY ADELAIDE HILLS' HAHNDORF HILL WINERY IN 2006-2009**

**ADELAIDE HILLS**  
does well due to high diurnal temperature variation, similar to Austria

**STYLES**

- Natural acidity and citrus fruit flavours make it aromatic and refreshing
- Adelaide Hills Grüner balances freshness and minerality with fruit character

**FOOD PAIRING**

- Its spicy, peppery quality makes it a great match with spicy Asian dishes
- Styles with textural richness can stand up to rich ingredients such as salmon

## Pairing food with Vermentino

Vermentino's crisp texture makes it a wonderful wine to match with medium-weight dishes featuring strong herbs and spices. It can stand up to rich fish and even white meats such as chicken and pork. Fish dishes such as salt and pepper squid and crab cakes make a great match with Vermentino, as well as strongly flavoured vegetable dishes, such as leek soup.

### Notable Vermentino examples include:

- Chalmers, Heathcote
- Oliver's Taranga, McLaren Vale
- Trentham Estate, Murray Darling
- Parish Hill, Adelaide Hills
- Koerner, Clare Valley

## GRÜNER VELTLINER

Austria's most planted variety is slowly growing a healthy fan base in Australia, with the importation of clones from Austria by Adelaide Hills' Hahndorf Hill Winery in 2006-2009 kicking off its popularity. Hahndorf's Grüner in 2010 arrived second only to Canberra's Lark Hill first commercial Grüner release in 2009, but since then several producers have taken up the challenge of crafting this intensely flavoured white variety. It has some herbaceous notes, with linear acidity that echoes Riesling.

### Where is Grüner Veltliner grown?

It turns out the Adelaide Hills region is a very successful home for Grüner Veltliner. Why? It boasts one of the biggest diurnal temperature variations in the country (diurnal variation is the difference between the maximum day temperature and the minimum night temperature), similar to its home in Austria. This allows the grape to

slowly build its sugar levels during the warmth of the day, while maintaining a balance of acidity during the cool nights at ripening season. The wines are sometimes rich yet briskly acidic, and elegant yet complex.

A secondary reason for its suitability is Adelaide Hills' soils, which are predominantly grey-brown or brown loamy sands with patches of sand, all of which are wonderfully free-draining, and well-suited to Grüner Veltliner.

So appealing is the Adelaide Hills region for the development of Grüner that together with Adelaide Hills Vine Improvement, Hahndorf Hill has established the Grüner Veltliner Project, where its clonal material is made accessible to other growers in the region, accelerating Adelaide Hills' intention to become the leading Grüner-producing region in Australia.

Lark Hill Winery in the Canberra District is also a noteworthy name in Australian Grüner Veltliner. After planting "mother vine" cuttings in 2004 and delivering its first vintage in 2009, Lark Hill became an internationally recognised Grüner Veltliner producer in 2011, finishing fifth in a worldwide Grüner competition.

### **Styles of Grüner Veltliner**

Grüner Veltliner's natural acidity and citrus fruit flavours means it strikes a balance between being aromatic and refreshing; it's quite dry, savoury and somewhat fruity. Grüner Veltliner from the Adelaide Hills balances freshness and minerality with depth and fruit character. It boasts a spicy peppery nose and dry crisp minerality, with a textural palate featuring spice, pear and hints of lemon with a cheeky white-pepper finish.

### **Pairing food with Grüner Veltliner**

The concentration of flavour can lead to a spicy, peppery quality that's delicious with spicy Asian-style dishes, and texturally rich styles can stand up to dishes featuring salmon, roast chicken and shellfish, or Japanese-style teriyaki dishes.

### **Notable Grüner Veltliner examples include:**

- **Hahndorf Hill**, Adelaide Hills
- **Pike and Joyce**, Adelaide Hills
- **CRFT K1 Vineyard**, Adelaide Hills
- **Lark Hill**, Canberra District
- **Stoney Rise**, Tasmania

# FIANO

**FIANO COMES FROM CAMPANIA IN SOUTHERN ITALY AND SICILY**

**WITH ITS SMALL BERRIES AND LOW YIELDS, IT HAS A NATURAL PROPENSITY FOR PREMIUM PRODUCTION**

**GROWN IN McLAREN VALE,**  
and Coriole winery in particular, with producers in NSW's Hunter Valley and Queensland's Granite Belt also exploring the grape

**STYLES**

- Wine show entries are in two classes: "Light and Fresh", and "Full-bodied and Textural"
- Flavours range from lemon and grapefruit through to peach, hazelnut and apricot

**FOOD PAIRING**

- Matches best with seafood
- Also makes a fine match with cream or tomato-based pasta dishes

## FIANO

Fiano hails from the Italian coastal region of Campania in southern Italy, along with the island of Sicily. This is another Italian variety that's thriving in Australia's wine regions with warm, dry conditions. In Italy, this variety has a reputation for creating full-flavoured aromatic wines with notes of honey, nuts and spices. With its small berries and low yields, it has a natural propensity for premium production, and that's how it's being made in Australia by winemakers with a keen focus on quality.

### Where is Fiano grown?

McLaren Vale is leading the charge with its Fiano production, and Coriole's expression of this variety is up there with Australia's finest. Grosset's certified organic high-altitude Rockwood Vineyard in the Clare Valley's Watervale is growing two different clones of the Fiano grape – one (VCR3) is very low yielding, small berried with concentrated

flavours; the other (Savio) displays fresher, more subtle flavours. Together they work a treat in Grosset's small-batch 'Apiana' Fiano. Producers in regions such as NSW's Hunter Valley and Queensland's Granite Belt are also exploring this style.

### Styles of Fiano

The winemaker determines the style of Fiano by the date of harvest and winemaking techniques. For example, if a winemaker picks the grapes later in the season and/or uses lees ageing post-fermentation, the Fiano will be a richer, more textural style compared to a wine made using Fiano grapes picked earlier in the season and without lees treatment. Australian Fiano can display a crisp freshness, with perfumed aromatics, and flavours ranging from lemon and grapefruit through to peach, hazelnut and apricot, with a palate that is viscous, textured and deep.

### Food pairing with Fiano

Given Fiano's home region is located by the sea in Italy's Campania, it's not surprising that some of its finest food matches are seafood. It pairs well with pasta dishes, especially with cream or tomato-based sauces, as the acidity in the wine offsets the richness of the cream and complements the acidity of tomato.

### Notable Fiano examples include:

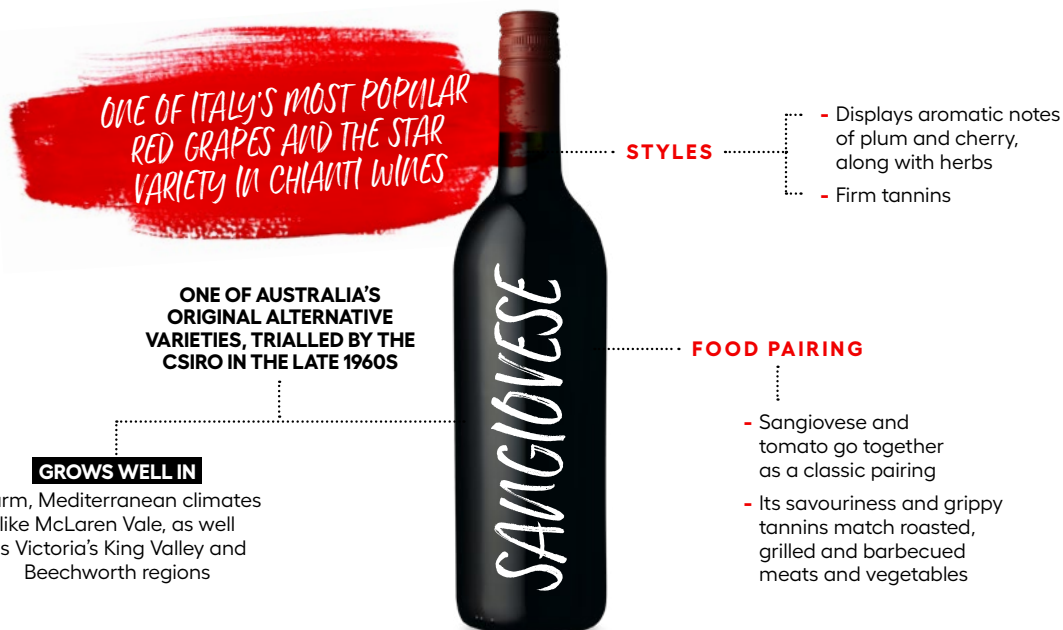
- **Coriole**, McLaren Vale
- **Grosset**, Clare Valley
- **Oliver's Taranga**, McLaren Vale
- **Jericho**, Adelaide Hills



### DID YOU KNOW

The Fiano grape can develop a sweetness that makes it extremely attractive to bees, which is why the ancient Roman viticulturists crafted this variety into a wine called 'vitis apiana', with the derivation of 'apiana' being Latin for bees. Look closely at vineyards growing Fiano and you'll spot a bee nearby!

# SANGIOVESE



## SANGIOVESE

Sangiovese is one of Italy's most popular red grapes, as the star variety in Chianti wines. In Australia, it's one of our original alternative varieties, trialled by the CSIRO in the late 1960s and planted in the early 1970s by Penfolds in the Kalimna vineyard in South Australia's Barossa Valley. Carlo Corino at Montrose in Mudgee also established a few trial plantings. However, it was Mark Lloyd of Coriole in McLaren Vale who put Sangiovese on Australia's wine stage, when in 1985 he sought to make something completely different to Coriole's signature Shiraz.

Sangiovese is a mid- to late-season ripening variety. It has good natural acidity and grows well in warm, Mediterranean climates, similar to that of McLaren Vale. By 1999, a range of other producers had taken on the Sangiovese challenge, including Chalmers and Stefano de Pieri of Mildura.

It's taken a while to reach peak quality production levels, but now the variety is beginning to shine, and adventurous wine drinkers are enjoying Sangiovese's striking flavour and flair. In Italian, Sangiovese is loosely translated to "Blood of Jupiter", the ancient Roman god.

### Where is Sangiovese grown?

Several Australian regions with various climate conditions are finding success with Sangiovese. Victoria's King Valley is thriving with its line-up of Italian varieties, including Sangiovese. Pizzini boasts multiple Sangiovese styles, ranging from its Rosetta Sangiovese rosé through to the flagship Rubacuori Sangiovese.

In McLaren Vale, Coriole has invested time trialling all kinds of Sangiovese iterations, such as blending it with Cabernet and Shiraz, and making it as a straight Sangiovese that's distinctive and complex.

## **Styles of Sangiovese**

Australian Sangiovese displays aromatic notes of plum and cherry, along with herbs. On the palate, the tannic structure is firm, often showing another layer of plum, cherry and sour cherry. Victoria's Beechworth region yields fruit that's crafted into a bright, juicy cherry expression of Sangiovese.

## **Pairing food with Sangiovese**

Sangiovese and tomato are a classic wine-and-food pairing, with the wine's tangy acidity matching the tomato's acid line. The variety's savoury notes and grippy tannins also pair well with roasted, grilled and barbecued meats and vegetables.

## **Notable Sangiovese examples include:**

- **Coriole**, McLaren Vale
- **Chapel Hill**, McLaren Vale
- **Lark Hill**, Canberra District
- **Chrismont**, King Valley
- **Dal Zotto**, King Valley
- **Pizzini**, King Valley

# NEBBIOLO

NEBBIOLO IS KNOWN AS THE VARIETY USED IN THE WORLD-RENOWNED BAROLO AND BARBARESCO WINES

## GROWN IN THE KING VALLEY

with cool nighttime temperatures. Other regions are exploring the potential of Nebbiolo, including the Mornington Peninsula, Beechworth, Yarra Valley and more



POSES SOME CHALLENGES IN THE VINEYARD AND WINERY, BUT PERSEVERANCE BRINGS GREAT REWARDS

## STYLES

- Australian styles all boast the typical tar and roses aroma, and most are high in tannins and acidity
- Australian winemakers have attempted powerful expressions of Nebbiolo, styles that are more approachable earlier in their life, and even rosé styles

## FOOD PAIRING

- Rich meaty dishes
- Cured meats
- Soft, creamy cheeses

## NEBBIOLO

Nebbiolo's challenging nature in the vineyard and its superb expressions in its home region of Piedmont in Italy were almost too perfect for Australian winemakers keen for the ultimate contest of facing adversity with fulfilling rewards. It's the variety used in Piedmont's extremely long-lived wines, Barolo and Barbaresco, revered for their intense perfume of tar, violets and roses. Nebbiolo calls for attention at every step of its cultivation journey in the vineyard and into the winery. Like its noble cousin, Pinot Noir, Nebbiolo boasts huge potential in Australia, but it's a finicky, delicate beast.

### Where is Nebbiolo grown?

The King Valley has proven a good environment for Nebbiolo, with its cool nighttime temperatures allowing the vines a chance to refresh after a warm day of growing. Success has also been seen in the Mornington Peninsula, Beechworth, Yarra Valley, Adelaide Hills, McLaren Vale and Clare Valley.

## Styles of Nebbiolo

Australian Nebbiolo comes in a variety of expressions, but the classic tar and roses aroma runs equally throughout most examples, and most are high in tannins and acidity. In Australia, styles include the more serious, long-living powerful expressions that are often released with age. But many producers are crafting styles that are more approachable earlier on in their life – including rosé styles – being light, fresh and easy to drink, with loads of flavour appeal and weight.

### Pairing food with Nebbiolo

You want foods that are fatty enough to cut through the tannin, but not so strong that they overpower the aromas and fruit. Rich, fatty meat dishes such as a ragu or cured meats are ideal, as are soft creamy cheeses like Camembert.

### Notable Nebbiolo examples include:

- Luke Lambert, Yarra Valley
- Giaconda, Beechworth
- Jasper Hill, Heathcote
- Longview, Adelaide Hills
- Primo Estate, McLaren Vale
- Pizzini, King Valley

# NERO D'AVOLA



## NERO D'AVOLA

Nero d'Avola is one of Italy's most renowned indigenous varieties, having been grown and crafted into a full-bodied red wine for hundreds of years. This southern Italian classic has recently made a move to other winemaking nations, including Australia, where the Chalmers family has imported the variety and nurtured it in its nursery vineyard in Mildura, and now in Heathcote, Victoria since 2001. Today, there are a number of Nero d'Avola vineyards in Australia – the varieties' success predominantly attributed to its innate ability to thrive in warm, dry conditions and its versatility, as well as its low water requirement in the vineyard.

### Where is Nero d'Avola grown?

Warm, inland regions, such as the Riverland and the Murray Darling, are enjoying great success with Nero d'Avola, as well as producers in South Australia's McLaren Vale.

### Styles of Nero d'Avola

Nero d'Avola is crafted into wines of generous, harmonious flavours that retain

their acidity. Depending on where it's planted and the desires of the winemaker, Nero d'Avola can make anything from a full-bodied and heady, cherry and berry-red style with ageing potential, through to a fresh, light raspberry-tinted rosé. In Australia, Nero d'Avola is mostly produced as a medium-bodied wine, with its naturally fresh acidity, generous tannins and savoury edge making it a top food-friendly wine.

### Pairing food with Nero d'Avola

With its robust flavours, fresh acidity and tannins, Nero d'Avola works wonders with all kinds of rich meaty dishes, from beef casserole to beef burgers loaded up with bacon and barbecue sauce. When it's made in a lighter, medium-bodied style, it pairs nicely with tomato-based dishes like meatballs.

### Notable Nero d'Avola producers include:

- Coriole, McLaren Vale
- Chalmers, Heathcote
- Brash Higgins, McLaren Vale
- Monterra, Fleurieu Peninsula



## HONOURABLE MENTIONS

# ASSYRTIKO

### MADE KNOWN IN AUSTRALIA

in the late 2000s  
thanks to Clare Valley's  
Jim Barry Wines

IN GREECE, IT'S MADE IN  
VARIOUS STYLES, FROM VIBRANT,  
FRESH, DRY WINES TO  
SWEET DESSERT STYLES



AUSTRALIAN WINEMAKERS  
ARE ATTRACTED BY  
ASSYRTIKO'S CAPACITY  
TO RETAIN ITS HIGH  
ACIDITY AND PRODUCE  
PREMIUM WINES WHEN  
GROWN IN WARM  
CLIMATES

## HONOURABLE MENTIONS

### ASSYRTIKO

In Greece, Assyrtiko is made into all kinds of styles, from vibrant, fresh-tasting dry wines to rich dessert styles. Its capacity to retain its high acidity and produce top-quality wines even in the face of intense heat has given it the potential to attract many Australian winemakers. This variety will no doubt prosper here, as drinkers yearn for fresh, crisp whites that drink well on their own or as a food partner.

## HONOURABLE MENTIONS

# TEMPRANILLO

SPAIN'S MOST  
POPULAR  
VARIETY.  
A COMPONENT  
OF RIOJA RED  
WINES

### VERSATILE,

loves warm climates, and  
blends well with varieties  
such as Grenache



MORE THAN 200  
AUSTRALIAN PRODUCERS  
CRAFT TEMPRANILLO

Australian warm-climate  
Tempranillos tend to  
be fleshy, saturated in  
colour, with blackberry  
and spice, and a  
balancing acidity

## TEMPRANILLO

Tempranillo is widely grown in Spain and is a component of Rioja wines. It's finding favour in Australia's climate due to its love of heat, its versatility and its ability to blend seamlessly with other varieties such as Grenache. There are now more than 200 producers growing Tempranillo, from the Canberra District to McLaren Vale.

Australian winemakers are following the global trend of producing more medium-bodied, fresher Tempranillos. They are saturated in colour, with blackberry and spice-driven wines that retain a balancing acidity. A great example is Gemtree's 'Luna Roja' from McLaren Vale.

Cool climates at high altitudes cultivate wines with elegance and acidity. In cool-climate regions, such as Adelaide Hills, pioneers like Nepenthe produce a style that's markedly more elegant, fresher and extremely food friendly.

## HONOURABLE MENTIONS

# TOURIGA NACIONAL

ONE OF  
THE MOST  
HEAT-RESISTANT  
VARIETIES

MAKING IT A GREAT MATCH  
FOR SOUTH AUSTRALIA, VICTORIA  
AND NEW SOUTH WALES

### THE WINES PRODUCED

are deep in colour, rich  
and powerful, with hints of  
spice and fresh acidity



TOURIGA NACIONAL'S  
FUTURE LOOKS BRIGHT  
IN AUSTRALIA, BOTH AS  
A VARIETAL WINE AND  
IN BLENDS, ESPECIALLY  
WITH TEMPRANILLO



## TOURIGA NACIONAL

One of the most heat-resistant varieties, up there with Grenache, has to be Touriga Nacional, considered Portugal's finest red grape. It's growing well in Australian areas as diverse as South Australia, Victoria (Bendigo, Goulburn Valley and Rutherglen) and New South Wales and the ACT (Hunter Valley, Mudgee and Canberra District). The wines produced are characteristically deep in colour, rich and powerful with great balance and fresh acidity. The future for Touriga Nacional in Australia looks bright, both as a varietal wine and in blends, especially with Tempranillo, evidenced in SC Pannell's McLaren Vale Tempranillo Touriga.



Other varieties gaining traction in vineyards all over the country include Barbera, Gamay, Durif, Zinfandel, Pinot Blanc, Cabernet Franc and Albariño.

**SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINT**

Given the pioneering spirit of the Australian winemaking industry and the innovative foundations on which the country is built, what does the future of alternative varieties look like?



# A FUTURE FILLED WITH **ALTERNATIVE** **VARIETIES**

Australia's winemaking community is made up of talented growers and producers keen to express their creativity while harnessing modern techniques. As alternative varieties become more widespread – and more in-demand thanks to discerning consumers – the Australian wine industry will continue to offer a vast and excitingly diverse array of premium wines of exceptional quality.

## KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- The success of Australia's alternative variety industry is a result of the innovation and pioneering spirit that's intrinsic to Australians' work ethic and cultural identity.
- Climate change is a primary motivator in the desire to bring in new varieties that are better suited to many regions' rising temperatures and dry spells.
- The globalisation of wine and the keen desire on the part of consumers to be challenged and excited by new styles are also driving the exploration of new varieties.
- Alternative varieties have been around for many years; it's only recently that many of them have flourished as a result of climate change, globalisation of wine and winemakers' hunger for creativity and innovation.
- The huge success of the Australian Alternative Varieties Wine Show (AAVWS) is testament to the appetite for alternative varieties and the health of the industry.
- From Grüner Veltliner in Adelaide Hills to Sangiovese in McLaren Vale, the diversity and distinction of every alternative variety in Australia shows it's a movement that's fast becoming a mainstay on our wine stage.

# SUGGESTED TIMINGS

This program is designed to be taught in one to two hours. How long you spend on each topic – or whether you cover it at all – will depend on your attendees as well as time allocation. Below are two different examples of how you may wish to divide your time.

## ONE-HOUR CLASS

Topic	Time (mins)
Welcome and introduction	5 mins
History of alternative varieties in Australia	10 mins
Introducing new varieties into Australia	5 mins
Reasons behind the rise	10 mins
Notable alternative varieties: Characteristics and tasting	25 mins
Summary and class close	5 mins

## TWO-HOUR CLASS

Topic	Time (mins)
Welcome and introduction	10 mins
History of alternative varieties in Australia	20 mins
Introducing new varieties into Australia	10 mins
Reasons behind the rise	20 mins
Notable alternative varieties: Characteristics and tasting	50 mins
Summary and class close	10 mins

## SUGGESTED WINES TO TASTE

These are just suggestions – you can select whichever wines best suit your tasting and audience. Wines may or may not be available in your area.

### Whites

- Coriole McLaren Vale Piquepoul
- Golden Grove Estate  
Granite Belt Vermentino
- Koerner 'Rolle' Clare Valley Vermentino
- Oliver's Taranga McLaren Vale Fiano
- Lark Hill Canberra District Grüner Veltliner
- Nick Spencer Tumberumba  
Grüner Veltliner
- Jim Barry Clare Valley Assyrtiko

### Reds

- Sorrenberg Beechworth Gamay
- Domenica Beechworth Nebbiolo
- Coriole McLaren Vale Sangiovese
- Gemtree 'Luna Roja'  
McLaren Vale Tempranillo
- La Linea Adelaide Hills Tempranillo
- S.C Pannell Tempranillo Touriga
- Longview Adelaide Hills Nebbiolo
- Luke Lambert Yarra Valley Nebbiolo
- Mount Horrocks Clare Valley Nero d'Avola
- Coates Langhorne Creek Touriga Nacional



**THANK YOU**