

Wine Whisperers: Meeting 12, October 2025.

Lesser Known Wine Regions of the World

Most wines we buy originate from the usual suspects: France, Germany, Australia etc. But there are many other regions of the world where the climate and topography enables vines and grapes to be grown and wine produced. As wines require a number of things to be successful commercially (including marketing, history, expertise etc.) some of the more obvious regions have an advantage. But, this doesn't mean that these other, lesser known, regions can't produce good wines.

This meeting will focus on wines from:

India

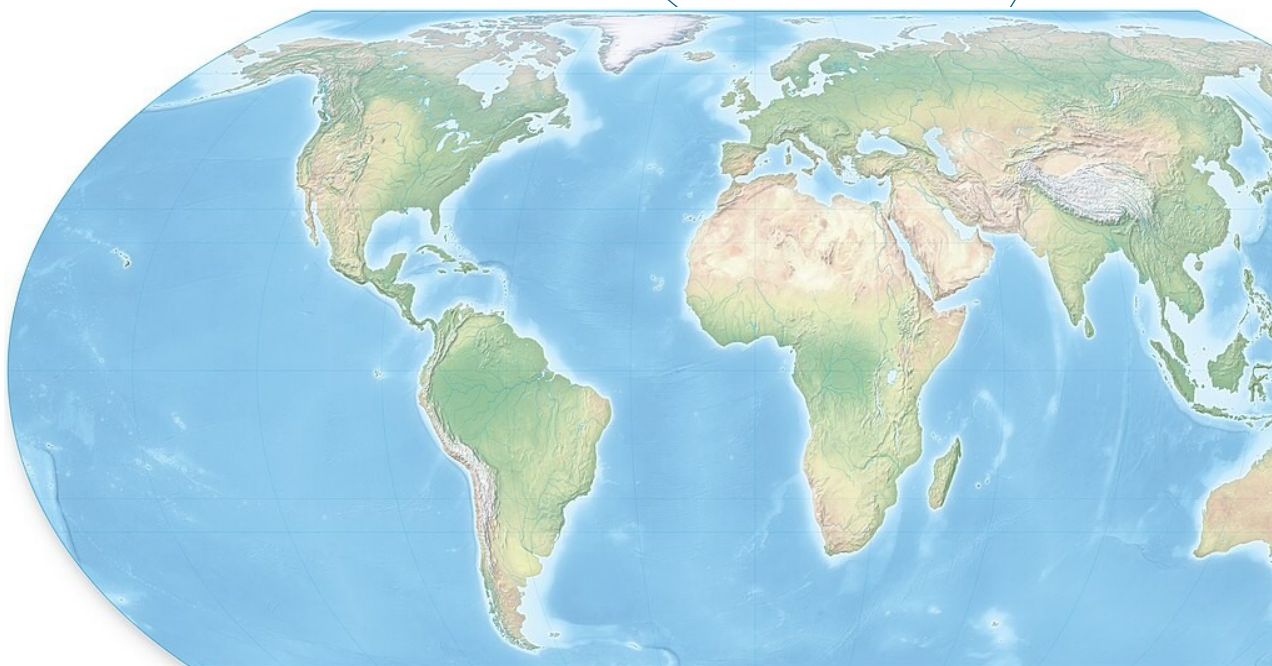
Hungary

Lebanon

Uruguay

Hungary

Lebanon



Main
wine

regions are located between the latitudes of 30° and 50° in both the Northern and Southern Hemispheres, as these zones offer the ideal balance of warmth and sunlight for grape ripening and cool winters for vine dormancy. While the 30-50° band is the primary area, the specific latitude and other factors like altitude, proximity to the ocean, and microclimates are also crucial for successful viticulture.

Uruguay

India

Uruguay



Maldonado & Progreso regions:
Both on south coast of Uruguay

WINE 2

Garzon Albarino 2024

£22.99

Region: Uruguay, Maldonado (On the coast east of Montevideo)

Grape Variety: Albarino

ABV: 13%

Pale yellow with a green hue, this Albariño is intense on the nose with peach and citrus aromas. The freshness and minerality on the mid-palate is superb, ably supported by a remarkable acidity which frames the juicy fruit on the crisp finish.

A relatively mild winter brought forward bud break by about two weeks. There were average levels of rainfall in spring and early summer, however the drought which followed in January caused a severe water shortage. Therefore the viticultural team used drip irrigation, thus ensuring perfect maturation in the grapes. Despite the water shortage and subsequent irrigation measures, veraison was uniform. Optimum maturation was also aided by the cooler nights which are becoming more common in the region. The wines from this vintage, with its early start and generally favourable climatic conditions, are elegant and fruit forward.

Only 11 miles from the Atlantic coast, in one of the most picturesque parts of Uruguay, lies Bodega Garzon. Its land is split equally between vineyards and olive groves and the stunning views prompted consultant winemaker, Albert Antonini, to liken the region to his native Tuscany. Despite the similarities in geography to Italy, the vineyards lie on the same latitude as New Zealand. This means cool climate styles are the most prominent and, unusually for South America,

Garzon's focus is on Tannat and Albarino. The winery itself was designed with energy efficiency in mind. Solar panels generate up to 40% of energy requirements, whilst the use of gravity wherever possible minimises emissions.

WINE 3

Pisano RPF Tannat 2018

£23.69

Region: Uruguay, Progreso (Near Montevideo on the southern coast of Uruguay)

Grape Variety: 100% Tannat

ABV: 14%

The Pisano vineyards belong to a group of small family growers with an artisan tradition of making wines that reflect the character of the land and the people. Francesco Pisano arrived in Uruguay in 1870 from Italy (the great grandfather of the current owners). The original vineyards were planted in 1914 by his son Cesare. Today, this winemaking tradition continues and they produce some of the country's most prestigious and best wines with distinctive character oriented to the high quality, niche market. These hand crafted wines are produced in limited quantities and total production at the Pisano family cellars is only 30,000 cases per year across the range of these award-winning varietals.

Region: At 34 degrees of southern latitude, the region of Progreso is adjacent to the Atlantic Ocean and its maritime influences. Here the vines grow on clay, ash and calcareous soils, north of the capital Montevideo and close to the Rio de la Plata (River Plate). The region benefits from a sunny and cool climate, the vines enjoy cooling winds to produce low yields of top quality grapes.

Tasting Notes: A big and bold red wine from Uruguay, aged for 12 months in French oak; a deep and seductive purple in colour, with concentrated and complex aromas of ripe dark plum and spiced wood. The palate is full bodied with great density in the mouth and robust jammy wild fruits such as damson, persimmons, plum and ripe blackberry flavours. Grippy tannins hold this big wine together and leads into a long finish with lingering black fruits and spice.

Hungary



Tokaj

Pécsdevecser (Wassmann)

WINE 4

Wassmann Bio-Dynamic Organic Cabernet Sauvignon 2017

£9.90

Region: Southern Hungary

Grape Variety: Cabernet Sauvignon

ABV: 13.5%

An elegant and round red wine, full-bodied with high acidity and well-integrated tannins. Deep and luscious nose, dark forest fruits and chocolate show dominance, with earthy and mineral tones just in the background. Flavours of vanilla, sweet spice and cedar from the oak ageing all coming through. The dark fruits and chocolate carry directly to the palate, with an addition of red fruit.

The depth and complexity of this wine lend themselves perfectly to roast or BBQ meats, especially lamb or beef. While the oak and dark fruits would pair beautifully with anything cooked over fire.

The Wassmann Winery is based in a quaint village in southern Hungary. The pristine countryside provides an ideal location for cultivating native grape varieties and creating premium biodynamic wines. Expats Susann and Ralf combine their love of the environment and love of fine wine, growing their grapes in an entirely natural manner. They treat their vineyard as a living and breathing ecosystem, looking out for the entire flora and fauna of the area to maintain its organic balance.

The wine has had 16 months in used Hungarian and French Oak Barriques.

WINE 7

TOKAJICUM Tokaji Sárgamuskotály Late Harvest 2023

£11.70

Region: Hungary, Tokaj

Grape Variety: Sárgamuskotály (Muscat Lunel)

ABV: 11.5%

This luscious dessert wine features, having had 1 year in oak, has an aroma with an intensely rich nose that showcases notes of honey, apricot, and mango. Its juicy palate is abundant with flavours

of caramel, ginger, and refreshing citrus fruits. It embodies the true character of Tokaj, with a light body and beautifully balanced sweetness that makes it highly drinkable.

What is a Tokaji Late Harvest? Tokaji late harvest wines present an approachable sweetness and offer a contemporary expression of Hungary's renowned Tokaj wine region. They appeal to both wine enthusiasts and casual drinkers alike.

The Tokajicum Winery is situated in the historic region of Tokaj and cultivates grapes on 20 hectares of premier cru vineyards. Under the guidance of renowned head winemaker László Buttella, the dedicated team harvests grapes from vines that are at least 40 years old, bringing alive the authentic flavour of the volcanic terroir with every drop.

Made from Sárgamuskotály, the noblest grape in the muscatel family, this native variety is ideally suited for producing aromatic wines. The perfectly ripe bunches are carefully selected and hand-picked, resulting in a golden wine that is softer and more accessible than its famous counterpart, the iconic Tokaji Aszú.

Crafted to be enjoyed young, this fresh and vibrant style highlights the unique volcanic terroir, making it an excellent introduction to the region's sweet wines.

India



Nashik, near Mumbai

WINE 1

Sula Sauvignon Blanc 2024

£12.29

Region: India, Nashik (near Mumbai)

Grape Variety: Sauvignon Blanc

ABV: 12.5%

Sula Sauvignon Blanc, is a crisp and refreshing Sauvignon Blanc that comes from one of India's premium wine producers: Sula.

Acclaimed for their Sauvignon Blanc grape variety it has aromas of cut grass and green peppers, bright gooseberry flavours and a hint of spice of the palate. Herbaceous, crisp and dry, with aromas of bell peppers, freshly cut green grass and refreshing acidity on the palate.

Goes well with fried food as well as rich, creamy dishes.

India's first ever Sauvignon Blanc has won a number of awards:

Silver Medal - Sommelier India Wine Competition 2009

Silver Medal - Decanter World Wine Awards 2011(UK)

Silver Medal - Decanter Asia Wine Awards 2012(HK)

Gold Medal - Indian Wine Consumers Choice Award 2012 & 2013

Nashik is India's largest grape-growing region, but had traditionally never been used to grow wine grapes.

Wondering why, an enterprising, Stanford-trained engineer named Rajeev Samant quit his hi-tech Silicon Valley job in 1993 to do some investigating. A little research quickly showed that the Nashik climate was not only perfect for wine grapes, but was also on par with winegrowing regions in Spain, California, and Australia.

His determination doubled and Rajeev returned to California in search of a winemaker. In Sonoma County he found Kerry Damskey, an eminent Californian winemaker, who enthusiastically agreed to help start a winery on Rajeev's 30-acre family estate.

Situated 180 km from Mumbai, Nashik is India's largest grape growing region, until recently all the fruit was table grapes.

For the first time in India they planted Sauvignon Blanc and Chenin, and the wines received wide acclaim.

Crisp and fruity, this Sauvignon is best served chilled solo or with spicy dishes.

WINE 5

Sula Shiraz 2024

£13.49

Region: India, Nashik (near Mumbai)

Grape Variety: Shiraz

ABV: 13.5%

Sula Shiraz is a smooth, medium-bodied red wine accentuated by ripe cherry and plum fruit, with attractive aromas of black pepper and a rich smoky character.

Sula Estates in Nashik is located approx. 2000 feet above sea level, to the north of Mumbai, in the Western Ghats mountains, giving a climate similar to South Africa.

Silver Medal - Syrah Du Monde 2014(France)

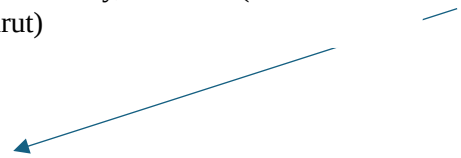
Bronze Medal - Decanter Asia Wine Awards 2011 (HK)

Bronze Medal - Indian Wine Consumers Choice Awards 2012

Lebanon



Bekka Valley, Lebanon (East of Beirut)



WINE 6

Chateau Ka Source de Rouge 2021

£19.29

Region: Lebanon, Bekka Valley

Grape Variety: Cabernet Sauvignon, Syrah, Merlot

ABV: 13.5%

Chateau Ka Source de Rouge is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah which gives the wine a delicate bouquet of red fruits and subtle spice whilst red pepper and soft tannins fill the palate with hints of liquorice.

Château Ka in Bekaa Valley is one of the Lebanon's most successful producers and one can see why from this little cracker. Their 'Source de Rouge' has a fine blend of cabernet sauvignon, merlot and syrah, it spends six months in oak and is rich, ripe and velvety soft.

Having graduated in Oenology from the University of Dijon, Akram Kassatly returned to Lebanon and, in 1973, managed to pull together sufficient funds to build his winery in the Bekaa Valley.

Tragically, shortly after the first wines were made, Lebanon was engulfed by war. The winery was attacked by the militia who, as well as stealing everything they could, opened the tanks and let 500 000L flow out. Devastated at the destruction of his dream, and with 3 young children to support, Akram returned to the family business, and during the next 30 years, in spite of the enormous challenges of war and foreign occupation, he managed to grow it into a major corporation. However, he never forgot his dream of producing great wine. Unbeknown to his family he started to buy land in the Bekaa Valley that would form the basis of their current 70 hectares of prime vineyard holdings and finally in 2005 he announced to his family that he was going to build another winery.

Today's Chateau Ka is the best equipped winery in Lebanon.

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Enjoy it with spicy meatballs!