

WINE ENTHUSIAST

10 VINEYARDS BEHIND THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS WINES

BY J'NAI GAITHER



Hewitson Old Garden vineyard / Photo courtesy Dragan Radocaj

THE WORLD'S OLDEST KNOWN MOURVÈDRE VINES HAS BEEN NAMED IN A LIST OF THE TOP 10 VINEYARDS IN THE WORLD.

It is often said that great wine begins in the vineyard, and with many of the world's most storied wines, that is unequivocally true. Yes, viticulture can be confounding, but it's the all-important factor that truly makes great wine. The soils upon which these vines grow matter, as do their elevations, orientation to the sun and various microclimates.



ROMANÉE-CONTI

Burgundy lays claim to a large number of the world's most storied vineyards. Many of these inimitable sites, also known as climats, are UNESCO World Heritage sites. Perhaps the most iconic site is Romanée-Conti, of Domaine de la Romanée-Conti (DRC) fame.

Notable Producer:
Domaine de la Romanée-Conti



CLOS DES GOISSES

The name says it all. While clos means walled vineyard, goisses is French for "very steep vineyard," and this roughly 13.5-acre plot on the north end of the Marne River in Champagne ascends from 30° to 45°.

Notable Producer:
Philipponnat

TO KALON VINEYARD

In Greek, To Kalon means "the beautiful," and standing at the overlook from Robert Mondavi Winery, it's easy to understand why. The 1,000-acre parcel in Napa Valley's Oakville appellation sees acres of vines butted up against a blue, cloudless sky and the lush, green Mayacamas mountains.

Notable Producers:
Robert Mondavi, Opus One, Realm Cellars

MONTRACHET

Another revered climat, or vineyard, in Burgundy is Montrachet, located in the Côte de Beaune, the southern part of the esteemed Côte d'Or. Centered around the town of the same name, the Côte de Beaune is not strictly a white wine region, but the whites are for what the region is known.

Notable Producers: Domaine de la Romanée-Conti, Bouchard Père et Fils, Domaine Leflaive, Joseph Drouhin and Louis Latour

COULÉE AU SERRANT

Planted in the 12th century by Cistercian monks, Coulée au Serrant has been continually harvested each year. As of 2020, the vineyard has seen 890 consecutive vintages. Coulée is a monopole and appellation in the Savennières district of the Loire Valley, owned by Nicolas Joly. The vineyard's 17-plus acres are planted to one of the flagship grapes of the Loire, Chenin Blanc.

Notable Producer: Domaine Nicolas Joly

SHEA VINEYARD

Because of Burgundy's storied pedigree, Pinot Noir is almost as noble as grapes come. And Pinot Noir in the States is gaining a foothold. Even Burgundian denizens praise Oregon's Willamette Valley for its great terroir for Pinot production.

Notable Producers:
Bergström, Ken Wright Cellars, Shea Wine Cellars and Winderlea



BIEN NACIDO VINEYARD

Located on California's Central Coast, Bien Nacido dates to 1837. However, it didn't arrive on many wine lovers' maps until the Millers, a fifth-generation family of California farmers, purchased it in 1969.

Notable Producers: Au Bon Climat, Bien Nacido Estate, Qupé, Twomey and Migration

CLOS SAINT-JACQUES

There's one premier cru vineyard in Burgundy that inspires awe in the way that many grand crus do, and that is Gevrey-Chambertin's Clos Saint-Jacques. Armand Rousseau has the largest holdings at a little over five acres. Its wines are said to be the plushiest of the bunch, but all are held in high esteem.

Notable Producers: Domaine Bruno Clair, Domaine Sylvie Esmonin, Domaine Fourrier, Louis Jadot and Domaine Armand Rousseau

CANNUBI

"It was like touching the stars with my hands," says Luciano Sandrone, a Piedmont producer, about Italy's most famous cru. Grapes have been grown in Cannubi since before Barolo was a designation. Owned by 19 producers, its 37 acres have been at the center of contentious property disputes and naming rights over the years.

Notable Producers: Brezza, Damilano, Michele Chiarlo, Sandrone and Paolo Scavino



OLD GARDEN VINEYARD

Contrary to what one might believe, the world's oldest-producing vines are not in Europe, but Australia. Planted in 1853, the Old Garden vineyard is now owned by Dean Hewitson, winemaker and proprietor of Hewitson winery in South Australia.

Notable Producer: Hewitson

HEWITSON BAROSSA VALLEY