

SPARKLING WINE

Guide



AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED

Free information, tools and
resources to discover and
share Australian wine



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tasting tools, as well as other modules, visit
www.australianwinediscovered.com



Wine Australia
supports the responsible
service of alcohol.





SPARKLING WINES



AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED



Crafted from grapes grown under vast and diverse climates, across landscapes millions of years in the making, every glass of Australian wine tells a story.

Like those who came before us, our modern growers and makers continue to be passionate, resilient and creative; constantly driven to explore new ways to perfect old techniques. Our community is connected by a mutual respect and shared love of crafting exceptional wine, while protecting the natural wonders for future generations to enjoy. Applying modern thinking to our ancient lands, we take playful experimentation very, very seriously.

So, if you're looking for the taste of adventure, let Australian wine be your compass. Because in every bottle of Australian wine, you'll experience the wonders of Australia – a reminder of the adventure and diversity that defines our culture and our land.



TODAY WE'LL COVER

- The history and rise of sparkling wine in Australia
- How sparkling wine is made
- Sparkling wine styles
- Australia's sparkling wine regions
- Drinking and enjoying sparkling wine

LOOP VIDEO

Now is a great time to play the 'Sparkling wine' loop video in the background, as you welcome people.

FIRST TASTE – This may be a good opportunity to give everyone a taste of a classic sparkling wine. The full tasting comes later in the module.



FUN FACT

A standard bottle of sparkling wine contains around 49 million bubbles.

THE JOY OF SPARKLING WINE

The pop of a cork, the splash of foam, the bead of fine bubbles – nothing says celebration like a bottle of sparkling wine. And for a long time, the only kind that signified a very special occasion was sparkling wine from Champagne.

But times are changing. Prestige sparkling wines from cool-climate, high-altitude regions are taking their place as the celebratory wine of choice for occasions both big and small. From bright and fresh Prosecco styles and sweet Moscatos to creative pétillant-naturels, authentic sparkling Shiraz and complex and powerful traditional-method styles, Australia boasts a great diversity of sparkling wine. These wines rely on pristine wine-growing regions, expert winemakers and a culture of innovation to create some of the world's finest sparkling wines.

HISTORY AND RISE OF: SPARKLING WINE IN AUSTRALIA

1881

The Victorian Champagne Company produces its first Sparkling Burgundy.

1893

Winemaker Edmund Mazure begins using Shiraz grapes to produce Australian sparkling reds in South Australia.

1918

Hans Irvine retires; Seppelts takes over Great Western winery, with Colin Preece as winemaker.



1950s

Sparkling wine gains momentum as a trendy, celebratory drink

Today

Australian sparklings are shining brighter than ever.

1930s & 1940s

Preece produces iconic sparkling reds that winemakers still try to emulate today.

1980s

Cool-climate, high-quality sparkling reds make a comeback, while Champagne and sparkling wine producer Moët & Chandon settles in the Yarra Valley to make Australian sparklings.



HISTORY AND RISE OF SPARKLING WINE IN AUSTRALIA

Australia has a rich and storied history of sparkling winemaking that dates back to the 19th century.

1800s

As far back as 1881, the state of Victoria was home to the Victorian Champagne Company, an entrepreneurial endeavour between a Melbourne doctor and French winemaker Auguste D'Argent. The Victorian Champagne Company didn't last long, but other winemakers soon followed suit and began experimenting with sparkling styles. Another winemaker, Edmund Mazure, used Pinot Noir grapes to make sparkling reds at Auldana, near Adelaide in South Australia, before making the groundbreaking choice to use Shiraz grapes for sparkling reds beginning in 1893.

1900s

Hans Irvine in Victoria's Great Western also started making Sparkling Burgundy, with his winemaker, Charles Pierlot, winning awards for his sparkling wines. Benno Seppelt took ownership of the winery in 1918 and put Great Western on the map, not only with the magnificent sparkling wines but also exceptional table wines, particularly Shiraz. Legendary winemaker Colin Preece took over in 1932 and pursued excellence in winemaking for the next three decades. Preece's headily rich, evocative and long-lived sparkling reds of the 1930s and '40s have inspired many other producers to create their own take on this incomparable Australian style – one that is still sought out by connoisseurs today.

Great Western continued to make good-quality sparkling wines in both white and red varieties, but it wasn't until the mid-1950s that sparkling really became popular as a celebratory drink in Australia. It started with Colin Gramp at the Barossa region's renowned Orlando winery. The Gramps were great innovators, always on the lookout for the next big thing. Colin noted the phenomenal success of perlwein, or semi-sparkling wine, in Germany, and decided to try it out in Australia. He enlisted the help of Günter Prass, a German sparkling specialist, to create 'Barossa Pearl'. This was a light sparkling made from Eden Valley Riesling, Barossa Semillon and Muscat. (Instead of sugar, Prass used Muscatel

and Frontignan juice to kickstart the sparkling wine's secondary fermentation, a technique that resulted in lower alcohol and sweeter flavours.) The result was a pretty, fruity, warm-climate sparkling that thrilled the wine-drinking public.

Many imitations followed, and it remained a popular choice for Australian wine drinkers who enjoyed these fruity, warm-climate sparkling wines for nearly 30 years.

Sparkling reds re-emerged in the 1980s due to a number of influences, including Australia's shift to cooler climates and higher-quality sparkling wines of finesse and style. It also helped that cellar hands at Seppelt Great Western had hidden away a collection of Colin Preece's iconic sparkling reds, showed them to the current winemaker and reinvigorated the style.

Also during this time, renowned Champagne producers Moët & Chandon scouted for a location in Australia to start making their own fine Australian sparkling wine. They enlisted the help of wine expert Tony Jordan, who ran a wine consultancy business with Brian Croser, famed founder of Petaluma winery.

Jordan and the French eventually settled on Victoria's beautiful Yarra Valley. It was a successful venture, and Domaine Chandon celebrated 30 years in Australia by winning the national trophy for Best Australian Sparkling Wine for its Chandon Prestige Cuvée 2005 at the 2016 Champagne and Sparkling Wine World Championships.

A shift in climate – and quality

The success of Domaine Chandon (and the considerably higher prices it could command for its quality product) inspired wine producers across Victoria and around Australia to explore other regions that could produce quality sparkling wine, and smaller regions with high altitudes, including Tasmania, Adelaide Hills and the King Valley started to emerge.

Australian fizz today

Today, sparkling wine represents a small but significant proportion of the Australian grape and wine community's total production, and it's a market niche for which there is excited consumer interest. Indeed, in the past few years, sparkling wine consumption has seen considerable growth.



SPARKLING WINE HOW IT'S MADE

Predominant sparkling wine grapes

- Chardonnay
- Pinot Noir
- Pinot Meunier

HOW SPARKLING WINE IS MADE

Grape varieties

A number of grape varieties go into making Australian sparkling wines. Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier are the most common grapes, while other grapes include Semillon, Chenin Blanc, Riesling, Crouchen, Trebbiano and Muscat Gordo Blanco. Red grapes, such as Shiraz and Merlot, usually go into medium to full-bodied sparkling reds.

Processes

Making sparkling wine is more complex and time-consuming than still winemaking, as there are additional, often labour-intensive steps.

Sparkling winemaking begins with winemakers carefully and selectively harvesting the wine grapes. For high-quality sparkling wine, winemakers look for premium grapes with high natural acidity, such as those in cool-climate regions. Sparkling wine grapes are also generally harvested earlier to ensure they have low sugar levels of approximately 9–11° Baumé (a unit measure of sugar ripeness) and high natural acidity.

Sparkling winemakers then press whole bunches of grapes gently to avoid extracting any colour or undesirable phenolics, such as tannins, from the red varieties. The must (pressed grape juice) then undergoes regular alcoholic fermentation to produce a base wine that is high in acidity and has a very neutral fruit flavour. Techniques such as malolactic fermentation and barrel fermentation are sometimes used, depending on the style of base wine desired.

Winemakers then produce a cuvée, or base wine, by blending different batches of wine. A cuvée often comes from more than one grape variety.

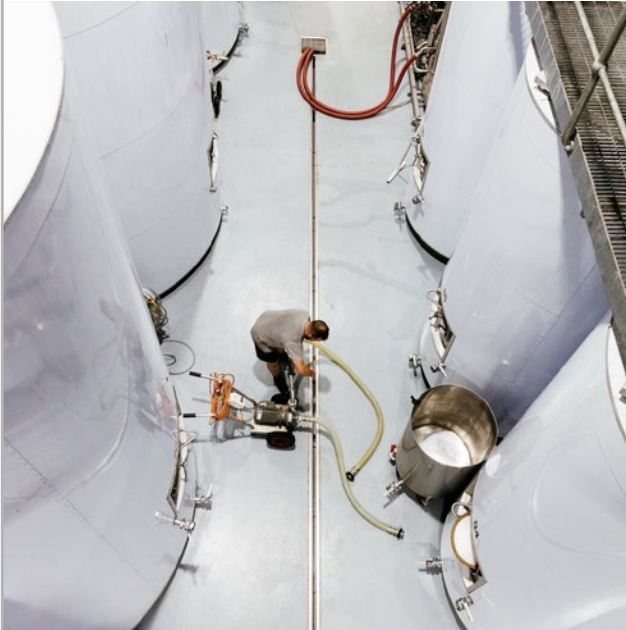
Vintage and non-vintage

Sparkling wines are either vintage or non-vintage (NV). The vintage is the year the winemaker harvests the grapes. Vintage wines are those produced from grapes from an excellent single-vintage harvest. For these wines, the year typically appears on the wine's label. NV wines comprise blends from different years (usually from two or three vintages) – this is to promote a consistency of style and quality in the sparkling wine from year to year.



DID YOU KNOW

The coeur de cuvée, the heart of the pressing, produces the purest juice. The taille (tail) is the coarser, inferior juice that flows from the press last.



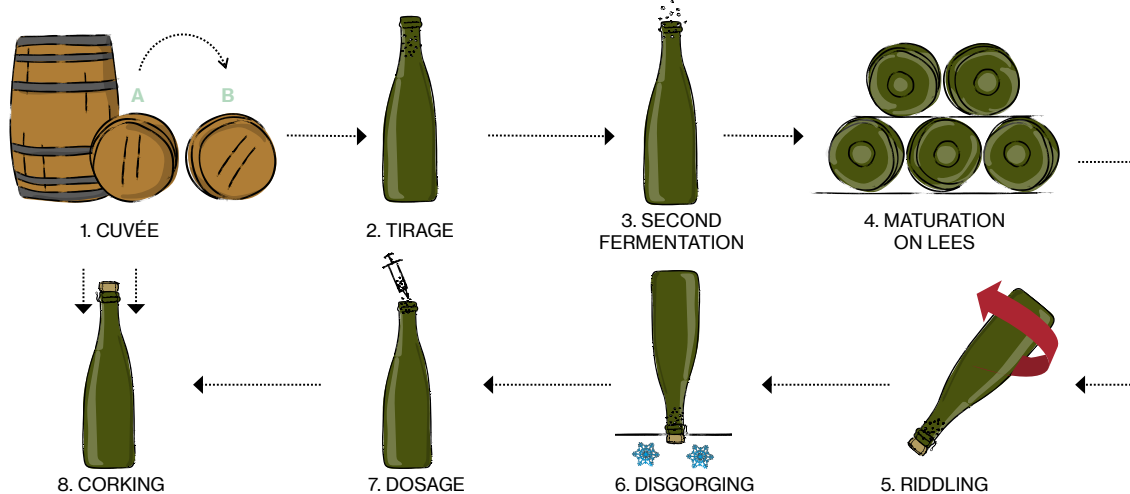
METHODS FOR PRODUCING SPARKLING WINE

- Traditional method (méthode traditionnelle)
- Transfer method
- Ancestral method (méthode ancestrale)
- Tank method
- Carbonation

SPARKLING WINEMAKING METHODS

Once the cuvée is made, there are several different methods for producing sparkling wine, each resulting in a slightly different style.

MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE: TRADITIONAL METHOD



TRADITIONAL METHOD (MÉTHODE TRADITIONNELLE)

The traditional method is the most well-known method and the one that's mandatory for Champagne – which legally can be produced only in the region of Champagne, France, using approved grape varieties and made according to specific rules. Traditional method produces the highest quality, most complex sparkling wines and is employed by many winemakers around the world to create top-quality sparkling wine. Australia was an early adopter, and the method is widely used in sparkling wine producing regions such as Tasmania and Adelaide Hills.

The traditional method starts with producing a cuvée or blended base wine. This blend is typically lower in alcohol, as the production process can add 1–2% alcohol by volume (ABV). A mixture of sugar (between 19–26 grams) and yeast, known as tirage liqueur, goes into the wine in bottles to stimulate a second fermentation. The bottles are topped with a crown seal, similar to a beer bottle cap. The secondary fermentation takes from four to six weeks. It increases the alcohol content by 1.3–1.5% and traps carbon dioxide in the bottle.

Once fermentation finishes, winemakers store the bottles horizontally with the lees (dead yeast cells) still in them. Eventually, these yeast cells break down and release proteins and chemical compounds into the wines – a process known as yeast autolysis. This maturation on lees, which can last from at least nine months to several years (it varies from region to region), is essential for producing the flavours and style of the sparkling wine. Contact with the lees allows sparkling wines to soften, mellow and gain complexity, texture and mouthfeel.

Next, the lees sediment can be collected from the wines via a large robotic machine called a gyropalette, which mimics hand riddling. Remuage, or riddling, is the process of gradually raising the bottles from their horizontal position into an upright, inverted position using a wooden A-frame rack (pupitre) – nowadays, hand riddling is typically only performed to show tourists how the process used to be done.

Over the course of a month, the lees collect in the necks of the bottles. Traditionally, an experienced cellar hand would painstakingly turn each bottle twice a day. Today, however, a gyropalette can automate the process, riddling hundreds of bottles at a time – a massive time- and money-saver.

The process of disgorgement then removes the lees from the neck of the bottle. (Without disgorgement, the wine would be hazy in appearance.) Only the necks are plunged into a brine solution and held at -24°C (-11.2°F), which freezes the plug of yeast. Then bottles are opened via automated machines and the pressure of the carbon dioxide that has accumulated pushes out the plug, leaving behind clear wine. Disgorgement does cause a slight loss of wine, so the winemaker then adds a dosage to the wine. The dosage adjusts the sugar level in sparkling wines by adding expedition liqueur, a mixture of wine and sugar. The dosage also determines the final level of sweetness in the wine. (Different styles include Brut Nature, Extra Brut, Brut, Extra-Dry (or Extra-Sec), Dry (or Sec), Demi-Sec and Doux.)

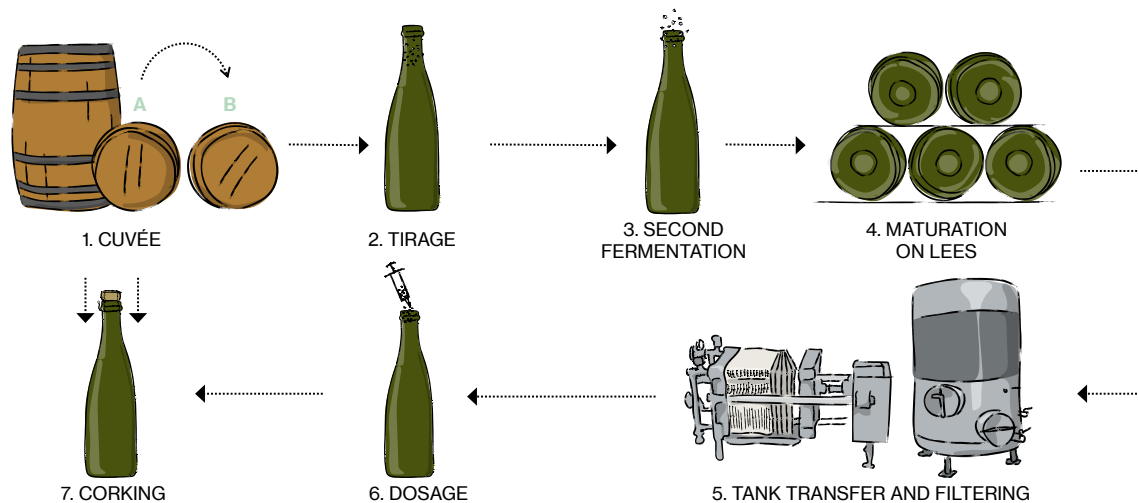
The wine is then sealed with a cork, with a wire cage, or muselet, tightened around the neck to hold the cork in place.



DID YOU KNOW

A skilled riddler would have turned as many as 60,000 bottles a day. Nowadays, gyropalettes have automated the entire process.

TRANSFER METHOD



TRANSFER METHOD

The transfer method aims to achieve the benefits of a second fermentation in the bottle without the complications and expense of the traditional method's riddling and disgorgement processes. Until you get to the riddling stage, the traditional and transfer methods are the same. Like the cuvée in the traditional method, this blend is typically low in alcohol, as the second fermentation contributes 1–2% of alcohol to the wine.

With the transfer method, the wine is removed from the bottle and transferred to a pressurised tank after its time on lees. All the wine is filtered in bulk to remove the yeast, then dosaged and pumped into new bottles.

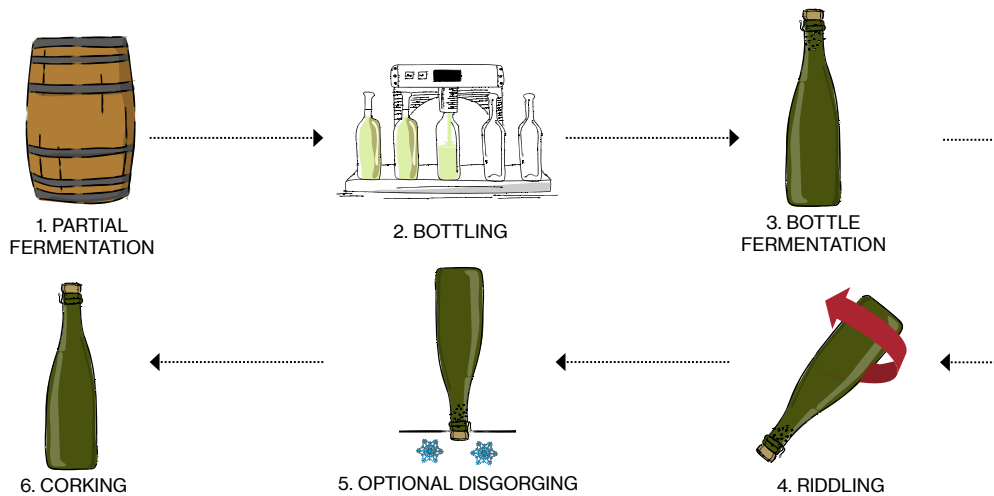
The transfer method has been widely adopted in Australia. In fact, the majority of Australian sparkling wine production uses this method, as it's less labour-intensive yet still produces high-quality wines.



DID YOU KNOW

If a wine claims to be 'bottle-fermented' as opposed to 'fermented in this bottle' on its label, it means the winemaker used the transfer method rather than the traditional method.

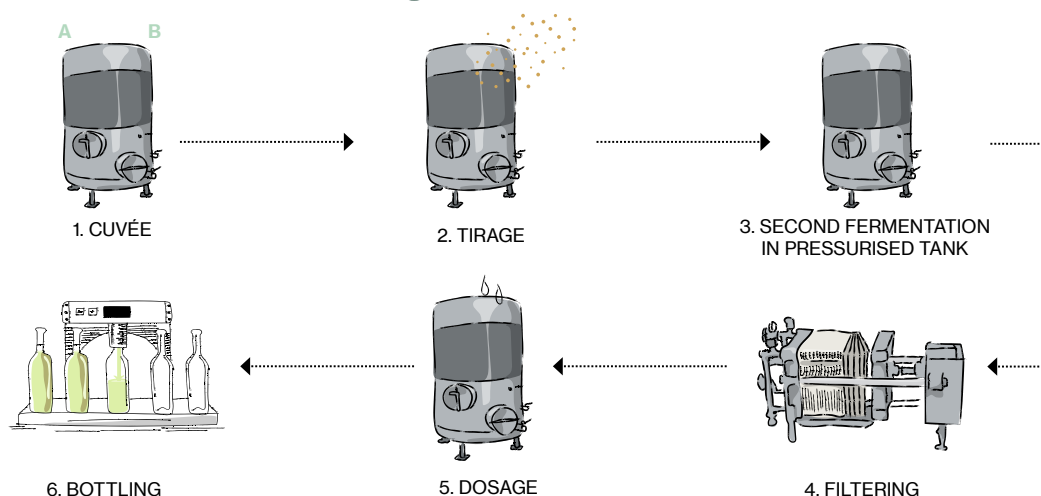
MÉTHODE ANCESTRALE: ANCESTRAL METHOD



ANCESTRAL METHOD (MÉTHODE ANCESTRALE)

The ancestral method is the oldest – and most difficult to control – method of making sparkling wine. In recent years, however, it's enjoyed a resurgence. The fermentation is arrested about halfway through the process by chilling down the tank – the cold temperatures render the yeasts inactive. A coarse filtration may be done at this stage, but traditionally, the partially fermented wine is transferred straight to a sparkling wine bottle (made with thicker glass to withstand pressure) and sealed (often in Australia under crown cap). As the wine warms up, the yeasts remaining will resume fermentation and the resulting carbon dioxide will be trapped in the bottle. The wine often isn't riddled or disgorged, resulting in a cloudy sparkling wine.

CHARMAT METHOD: TANK METHOD



TANK METHOD

Also known as the charmat or cuve close method, the tank method begins the same way as bottle-fermented (traditional and transfer method) wines, but once the first primary fermentation is complete, the dry base wine moves to a pressurised tank rather than a bottle. The winemaker adds sugar and yeast to start the second fermentation and seals the tank to keep the carbon dioxide from escaping. The carbon dioxide dissolves into the wine, creating bubbles. When the second fermentation finishes, the winemaker filters and bottles the wine under pressure to again retain the carbon dioxide. These wines tend to spend less time on lees than bottle-fermented sparkling wines, lending them little or no autolytic character. When someone opens the wine bottle, the drop in pressure changes the dissolved carbon dioxide (in the form of carbonic acid) into a gas again, causing the wine to bubble.

Another popular method among Australian winemakers, the tank method can be a cost-effective choice, as it cuts back on production expenses.

An alternative approach

To make sweet sparkling wines with low alcohol levels, winemakers sometimes use a variation on the tank method. Unlike many other sparkling winemaking methods, wines using this approach undergo only one fermentation. The winemaker places the grape juice in a pressurised tank and adds yeast to kick off the fermentation. They initially let the carbon dioxide escape until trapping it towards the end of the fermentation to achieve the desired level of carbonation. When the wine achieves the right level of alcohol, the winemaker disrupts the fermentation by chilling the wine. The wine is then filtered to remove the yeast, then bottled under pressure. Moscato is one particular wine made according to this style.

Carbonation

Carbonation is the least expensive way to produce sparkling wine. For this method, the winemaker injects carbon dioxide into a chilled base wine.



DID YOU KNOW

In Australia, a wine can have 'sparkling' on the label only if it gets its carbon dioxide from fermentation, not carbonation.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

What are some of the pros and cons of traditional-method winemaking?



THREE PRIMARY SPARKLING WINE STYLES

- Dry brut style – the most popular
- Sparkling rosé – a niche style
- Sparkling red, especially Shiraz – a uniquely Australian style

AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINE STYLES

Most Australian sparkling wine consists of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes, with the most common style a blend of the two. Australian grape growers pick cool-climate Chardonnay fruit early to retain its high acidity levels before it's too ripe and acidity levels decrease.

Some winemakers also make single-variety (100%) sparkling Chardonnays, known as Blanc de Blancs (French for 'white of whites'). Australian Blanc de Blancs tend to be elegant, savoury, floral and dry, with robust acid. Aged Blanc de Blancs – like all sparkling wines that have spent extended time on lees – can also develop toasty notes. Other winemakers do produce single-variety (100%) sparkling Pinot Noirs, known as Blanc de Noirs (French for 'white of blacks', or white wine made from red grapes).

In addition to Pinot Noir, Australian winemakers blend Chardonnay with Pinot Meunier; sparkling wine blends that include red varieties such as

Pinot Noir or Pinot Meunier tend to be more full-bodied and show more delicate red fruit notes than those made from just Chardonnay.

TIME TO TASTE – You may like to taste your selected mix of Australian sparkling wine styles as you work through the relevant sections below.

Dry brut style

A dry brut is the standard style for most sparkling wines. Brut indicates that the wine has a specific range of dosage resulting in no more than 12 g/L of residual sugar. Typical aromas for Australian dry brut styles are biscuit, dough, toast, apple and grapefruit.



DID YOU KNOW

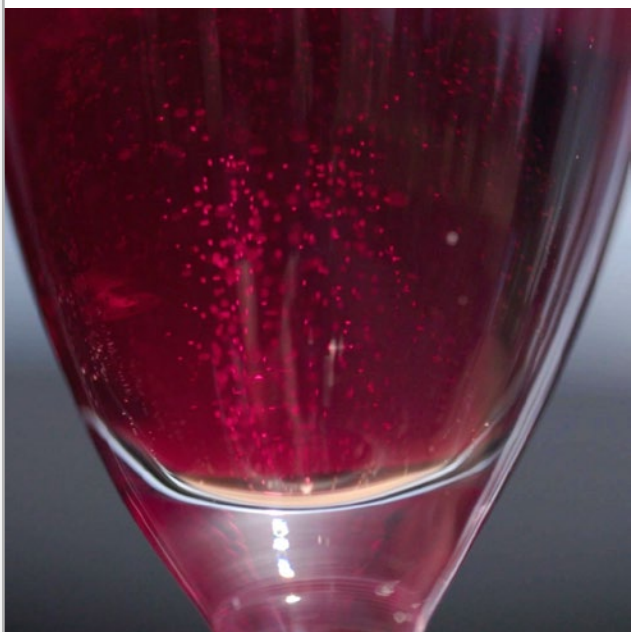
'Brut nature' refers to wines with no dosage, or zero dosage.

Sparkling rosé

Australian sparkling rosé makers typically make their wines primarily from Pinot Noir (and sometimes other red) grapes. They produce sparkling rosé in the same way they produce white sparkling, but they achieve the range of rosé colours in a few different ways:

- By blending a small percentage of red wine (usually Pinot Noir or Pinot Meunier) with the cuvée, a process known as rose d'assemblage; this is the most common method.
- By allowing for limited skin contact with red grapes during primary fermentation, known as the saignée method (French for 'bleed') in French sparkling wine production.

Australian sparkling rosés typically range in colour from salmon to pink and display characteristics similar to those of light red wines. Their aromas include floral, rose petal, strawberry, raspberry and red currant, and more complex wines may also feature spicy or nutty notes.



SPARKLING SHIRAZ AUSTRALIA'S RED TREASURE

- Medium to full-bodied
- Unique style
- Medium levels of acidity
- Aromas of black and red fruits, spice, confectionery
- Range from off-dry and fruity to dry and complex

SPARKLING SHIRAZ AND OTHER SPARKLING REDS

Australia is one of only a few countries in the world known for its sparkling red wines. Sparkling reds are a particular Australian specialty, with sparkling Shiraz Australia's most famous sparkling red – and the most popular with winemakers.

Other notable sparkling reds

In addition to Shiraz, Pinot Noir, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Durif and Chambourcin make some dazzling sparkling examples.

Production of sparkling red

Sparkling red wines start out in the same way still reds do – they undergo fermentation on skins to obtain colour, flavour and tannin. Winemakers can produce these wines using the traditional (in the case of premium examples), transfer, tank or carbonation methods. Depending on the style desired by the producer, the level of tannin can vary. However, the cuvée typically has low tannin levels and spends more time on lees before the winemaker sweetens and bottles it. Depending on the wine producer, these wines can have some sugar on the palate – anything from off-dry to medium-sweet – with the sugar negating the

high tannin and alcohol content to deliver rich, flavourful wines. This is achieved through various dosage methods, with some producers using fortified wines and others using red wine. Serve these sparkling reds slightly chilled – they make for the perfect celebratory drink.

Sparkling reds and age

As young wines, sparkling reds are often crimson coloured, juicy, fruity and refreshing. They should already be complex with soft tannins and berry flavours. Premium Sparkling Shiraz can bottle-age for 10 years or more. Aged wines or those that have spent extended time on lees often deliver a smooth, velvety mouthfeel and develop rich, sweet-fruit characters similar to those of still Shiraz wines, including black fruit like plum, as well as pepper. These older sparkling reds make for some truly extraordinary wines.

Pét-nats

There's a new (or old) style of sparkling that's making a big splash on the Australian wine scene: Pét-nats, short for pétillants naturels, are effervescent, vibrant 'natural' sparklings that are taking wine bars and restaurants by storm. Producers make these natural sparkling wines, which are often cloudy and textural, using the ancestral method (méthode

ancestrale) of fermentation, often without a final disgorgement. There are very few rules regarding how a winemaker should make a pét-nat, but winemakers often refer to the style as similar to that of a cloudy cider or beer but with the intense, exciting, natural flavours of the grape and lots of texture. It involves bottling before the first fermentation is completed, which allows the process to finish inside the bottle.



COMPLEMENTARY READING

PÉT-NAT WINEMAKERS

Bryan Martin at Ravensworth in the Canberra District's Murrumbateman region is an innovative pét-nat producer. Martin doesn't have his own winery – he uses a corner of the iconic Clonakilla winery (where he is production winemaker) to make his astonishing natural, textural, structural wines. His work at Ravensworth is a blend of experience, experimentation and exploration, using a range of old and new techniques. For his intensely flavoured, textured Riesling pét-nat, he pressed whole bunches of grapes into two ceramic eggs, then left them alone to develop. (Ceramic eggs are a vessel for fermentation and are currently very popular in winemaking circles. The ceramic imparts no flavour to the wine, and the egg is shaped just so to assist with the natural fermentation process.) According to Bryan Martin, drinkers should see each bottle as individual and not judge them. A very pét-nat philosophy!

Jauma in South Australia is another colourful outfit renowned for its natural and adventurous winemaking. Winemakers James Erskine and Mark Warner, along with viticulturist Fiona Wood, create wild, creative and expressive wines from organic, hand-picked grapes with no added yeast, enzymes, tannins or acid. There's no filtration, either. They describe their pét-nat Chenin Blanc as slightly fizzy with "swooshy, cleansing acids, apples and pears, and a lace of minerality".

For red lovers, there's the Jauma 'Peek-a-Boo' Grenache pét-nat that's lightly sparkling, with grapefruit notes and lots of flavour.

Another winemaker pushing the pét-nat boundaries is Brendon Keys at BK Wines in South Australia's Adelaide Hills region. BK Wines believe in "quality and creativity, not conformity" – a premise that definitely plays out in the winery's pét-nat Chardonnay. "Roiling foam and an effervescent tickle are the opening salvo. Biscuit and nutmeg notes with a tart Pink Lady [apple] acid crunch resemble a dish of apple crumble and lemon curd. Sour sherbet with a sweet candy mid-centre. It's well worth the furrowed, worried brow this tricky winemaking style can induce in the winery."

The only problem for lovers of these artisan pét-nats is that their drink-right-now nature and their small quantities make them hard to acquire. The general consensus is if you see one, grab it, and keep your eyes peeled for new-season releases.

Other sparkling wine terms and variations

If you see the following on an Australian sparkling wine label, here's what they mean:

Crémant:

A term sometimes used in Australia to indicate a sparkling wine with less effervescence due to less pressure in the bottle. Also, a sparkling wine (outside the French Champagne region) that uses the traditional method.

Frizzante:

Slightly sparkling.

Moscato:

Lightly sparkling wines typically with low alcohol but high sugar levels. Must be made from at least 85% of varieties within the Muscat family.

Prosecco:

A fresh, crisp white sparkling wine that is seeing great success in Australia.



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINT

Aside from the obvious colour, how do Australian sparkling reds differ from sparkling whites?

SPARKLING WINES IN THE GLASS

COLOUR



From pale to rosé to red

FROM DRY
TO SWEET



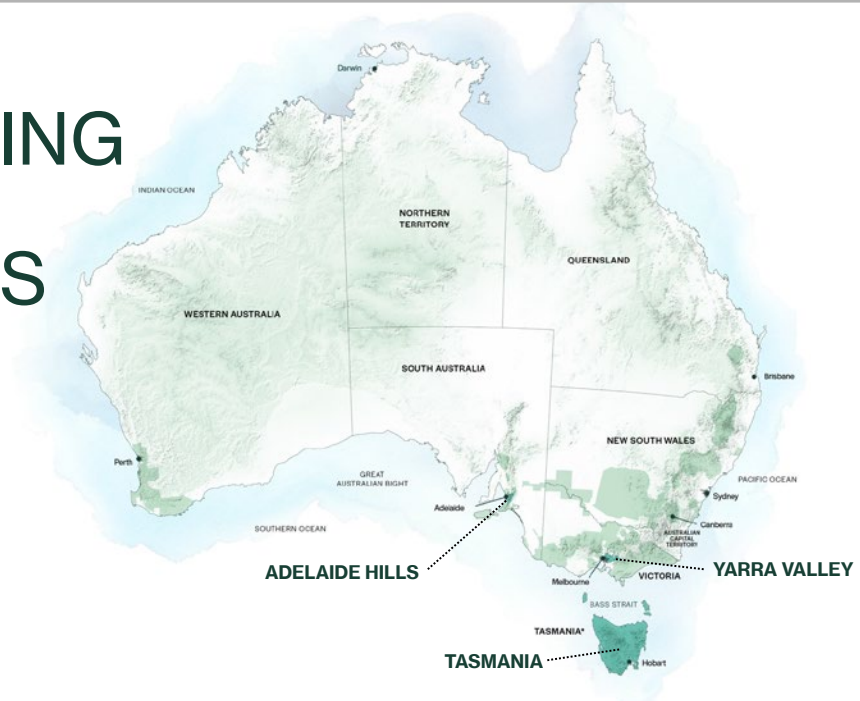
LIGHT AND
REFRESHING WITH
CRISP ACIDITY TO
COMPLEX, INTENSE
AND FULL-BODIED,
WITH LONG
LENGTH

TYPICAL FLAVOURS

- Apple
- Mineral
- Citrus
- Vegemite

(A DISTINCTLY AUSTRALIAN FOOD
SPREAD OF YEAST EXTRACT)

NOTABLE SPARKLING WINE REGIONS



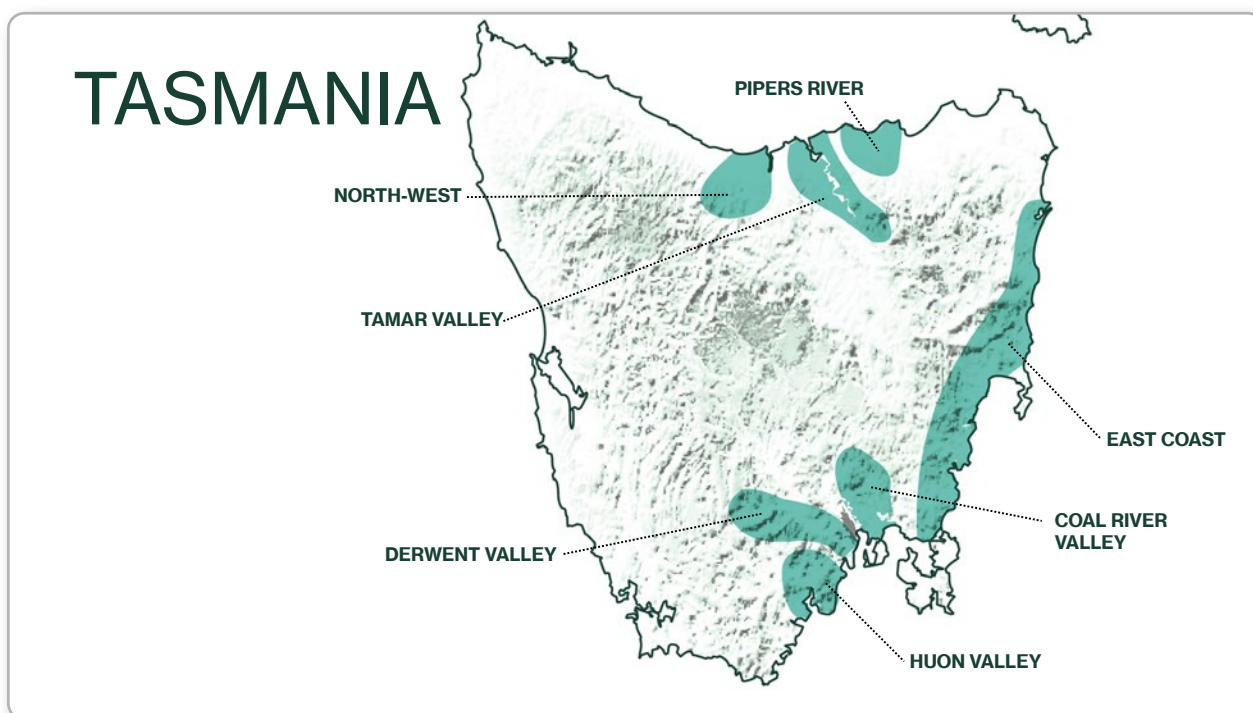
TIME TO TASTE – You may like to taste your selected mix of regional expressions of Australian sparkling wine as you work through the relevant sections below.

AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINE REGIONS

Climate is key

Australia's cool-climate regions are ideal for producing sparkling wine. These areas have lower average temperatures (perfect for maintaining all-important acidity levels), elevation and longer growing seasons. For a long time, people didn't believe sun-soaked Australia could capitalise on such marginal sites, but as pioneering winemakers have sought these cooler sites and 'new' regions such as Tasmania have emerged, seismic shifts have been occurring in Australian wine. Owing to their altitude and the relative difficulty of these sites, winemakers historically shunned many of them. But with a growing interest in crafting fine Australian wines that are based on elegance and nuance rather than power and exuberance from vines such as Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, cool-climate sites are crucial.

The fruit from these exciting new areas has unlocked the door to Australia's sparkling potential, and wines from regions including Tasmania, Adelaide Hills and Yarra Valley offer wines that are challenging the best in the world. Indeed, at the 2016 Champagne & Sparkling Wine World Championships, Australia won nine gold medals and nine silver medals, underlining its position as a world-class producer.



TASMANIA

Sparkling wines to challenge the world's finest

As one of the country's premier cool-climate regions, the island state of Tasmania is a true star of the Australian sparkling wine community. Tasmania produces some of Australia's finest sparkling wines, reflecting high levels of winemaking expertise and the advantages of a naturally pristine, cool environment. Tasmania's winemakers are creating sparkling wines of impeccable structure and style. Its cool climate provides ideal conditions for sparkling wine grapes such as Chardonnay and Pinot Noir (the most widely grown grape varieties here). Much of that fruit goes into the production of premium, traditional-method sparkling wines.

Notable Tasmanian sparkling wine producers include:

- House of Arras
- Jansz
- Pirie
- Freycinet



TASMANIA SNAPSHOT

Climate

Tasmania has a moderate maritime climate influenced by westerly winds off the Southern Ocean.

- Australia's coolest-climate region.
- High humidity, spring frosts.
- Similar climate to Champagne and parts of the Rhine Valley.

Latitude

- 43° 08'S

Growing season rainfall (GSR)

- 477mm (18.8in)

Calculated from October to April in Australia, growing season rainfall is a good indication of how much water is available to the vine.

Mean January temperature (MJT)

- 15.6°C (60°F)

Mean January temperature refers to the mean temperature of the warmest month. Tasmania's mean January temperature falls below the coolest range on the graph, making it Australia's coolest winemaking region.

Please check the Wine Australia website for up-to-date information. Altitude refers to the highest and lowest vineyard in the GI region, not necessarily the highest or lowest point within the region and is calculated using the National Vineyard Scan and state contour datasets. Latitude is taken at the central point of the GI region. Meteorological data is taken from the national climate data bank of the Bureau of Meteorology: the Australian Data Archive for Meteorology (ADAM). Climate indices have been calculated across the whole GI region by the Antarctic Climate and Ecosystem CRC as part of a research project co-funded by Wine Australia. Growing season rainfall (GSR) and mean January temperature (MJT) based on 1991–2017 averages from the Bureau of Meteorology (2018). GSR is calculated from October to April.



COMPLEMENTARY READING

TASMANIAN TRIUMPH

Although you can find prestige examples of sparkling wines all around Australia, the stunningly elegant, nuanced, textured wines from Tasmania are truly raising the stakes. In tastings, ratings, top 10 listings and competitions, Tasmanian sparkling wines are doing extremely well. Indeed, they're gaining such acclaim that the island once known as the Apple Isle (as it is a major producer of apples) may soon find that it becomes known as the Sparkling Isle. (Or perhaps people will begin referring to it as the Pirie Isle, Jansz Isle or Arras Isle – such is the success and fame of these three prestige Tasmanian sparklings.

Jansz was born of a venture into sparkling wine between Louis Roederer and Heemskerk Vineyards. Now owned by the Hill Smith Family of Yalumba fame, Jansz enjoys a reputation as one of the finest sparkling houses in Australia. Using a play on words, the winery calls its style 'méthode Tasmanoise' rather than the more conventional *méthode traditionnelle*.

Pirie Tasmania honours the immense contribution of Dr Andrew Pirie, founder of the famous Pipers Brook label. Pirie put Tasmania on the world wine map and has received a Member of the Order of Australia for services to the Tasmanian grape and wine community. Pirie Tasmania (now owned by Brown Brothers) also enjoys a hallowed reputation for its outstanding sparklings.

The third in the trio of iconic Australian sparkling wines is House of Arras, headed by winemaker Ed Carr. Arras has been around only since 1988, but its sublime sparkling wines are already legendary. The winery's philosophy is simple: to create world-class sparkling wines. Of course, where the philosophy is simple, the practice is usually anything but! The incredible patience and careful craftsmanship that Arras practises has seen Carr garner more than 100 trophies in Australian wine shows, including 21 consecutive 'Best Sparkling White Wine of Show' awards.

Other prestige producers impressing with their fine Tasmanian sparkling include Stefano Lubiana, Josef Chromy, Kreglinger and Clover Hill.



SOIL

On the lower slopes, the vineyard soils feature ancient sandstones, mudstones, river sediments and igneous rock of volcanic origin. Sandstone and schist appear in Derwent Valley. Peaty alluvial and sandy low humus soils appear in Coal River Valley. Pipers River boasts deep, free-draining, friable soils, while Tamar Valley is gravelly basalt on a clay and limestone base.

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COMPLEMENTARY MODULE

To discover more about our this region, check out the **Tasmania** module at www.australianwinediscovered.com



ADELAIDE HILLS

South Australia's Adelaide Hills is just a 20-minute drive from Adelaide, the state's capital. The coolness of the region's altitude, its changing seasons and the skill and passion of its winemakers shape the wines from Adelaide Hills. Its winemaking evolution continues, and it's a hotbed of creativity – home to a number of bold, boundary-pushing grapegrowers and winemakers.

The region specialises in both table and sparkling wines. In the cooler areas here, Chardonnay and Pinot Noir produce exemplary sparkling wines.

Notable Adelaide Hills sparkling wine producers include:

- K1 by Geoff Hardy
- Deviation Road
- Croser by Petaluma
- Terre à Terre Wines



ADELAIDE HILLS SNAPSHOT

Latitude:

– 34° 98'S

Climate

Adelaide Hills experiences cool winters with winter-dominant rainfall. A large proportion of the region is fortunate enough to have robust underground water supplies, with water quality ranging from 'spring water' in the Mount Lofty area to generally drinkable water throughout the rest of the region.

Altitude

Adelaide Hills' altitude provides ideal conditions for sparkling wine grapes Chardonnay and Pinot Noir to retain their acid levels and develop their fruit flavours. This makes it one of Australia's most exciting sparkling wine regions – where crisp, cool-climate wines meet subtlety and style.

Growing season rainfall (GSR)

– 268mm (10.5in)

Adelaide Hills receives relatively low levels of rain during its growing season. However, rainfall varies throughout the region, increasing at higher elevations and mainly falling in winter and spring. A large proportion of the region is fortunate enough to have robust underground water supplies, with water quality ranging from 'spring water' in the Mount Lofty area to generally drinkable water throughout the rest of the region.

Mean January temperature (MJT)

– 20.4°C (68.7°F)



SOIL

Adelaide Hills' soils are highly variable in structure and chemistry. The region has a mixture of grey-brown or brown loamy sands, while soil depth is variable due to topography.

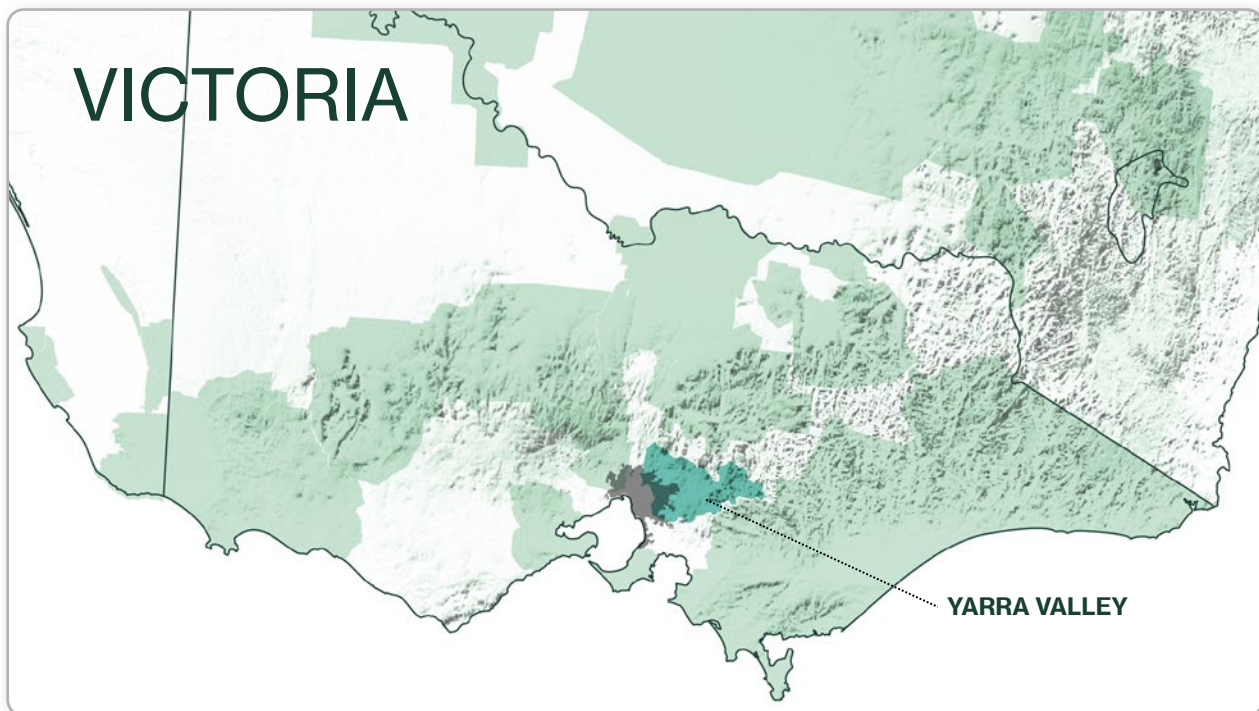
SOIL

Low-lying areas with heavy soils provide potential for greater vigour, while higher, well-drained stony soils allow vigour control.



COMPLEMENTARY MODULE

To discover more about this region, check out the **Adelaide Hills** module, at www.australianwinediscovered.com



YARRA VALLEY

The Yarra Valley was the state of Victoria's first wine-growing district and is known as the birthplace of Victoria's wine and grape community. The region is also significant and exciting for its premium sparkling wine scene. In the 1980s, Champagne producers Moët & Chandon scouted Australia for a place to make their own fine Australian sparkling wine. The Champagne house knew that cool climate and good soil were key and settled in the Yarra Valley with great success. Today, Domaine Chandon produces some of Australia's finest sparkling wines.

Notable Yarra Valley sparkling wine producers include:

- Domaine Chandon
- Yarra Burn
- Yering Station (Yarrabank)
- Dominique Portet



SUGGESTED DISCUSSION POINTS

Why are Australia's cool-climate regions better for producing sparkling wines than its warmer-climate regions?



FUN FACT

The wine centre at Domaine Chandon attracts more than 100,000 visitors every year and provides tours of the sparkling wine process, which uses the traditional method.



YARRA VALLEY SNAPSHOT

Latitude

- 37° 73'S

Climate

- One of Australia's coolest regions
- Rainfall dominant in winter and spring
- Cool, dry and humid summers

The Yarra Valley's cooler climatic conditions make it ideal for growing sparkling wine Chardonnay and Pinot Noir grapes.

Growing season rainfall (GSR)

- 559mm (22in)

The Yarra Valley experiences most of its rain during winter and spring, with the summer being relatively cool, dry and humid.

Mean January temperature (MJT)

- 18.9°C (66°F)

In the cool-temperature range, Yarra Valley experiences a long, slow ripening period to produce some flavoursome grapes and wines. Temperature hazards such as spring frosts can be a risk.



SOIL

The Yarra Valley's northern side feature soils of grey to grey-brown on the surface, and with red-brown clay subsoils often filled with rock. The other major soil type is the fertile red volcanic soil on the southern side of the valley.

SOIL

The Yarra Valley's diverse topography is reflected in its various soil types. The traditional grape-growing areas on the northern side of the valley feature soils of grey to grey-brown in colour on the surface, and range from loamy sand to clay loam in consistency with red-brown clay subsoils, often filled with rock. The other major soil type is the immensely deep and fertile red volcanic soil in the southern side of the valley. The variation in altitude and soil types in this hilly region creates differences in climates and exposure, which suits some varieties.



COMPLEMENTARY MODULE

To discover more about this region, check out the **Yarra Valley** module at www.australianwinediscovered.com



OTHER NOTABLE AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING REGIONS

- Tumbarumba
- Hilltops
- Macedon Ranges
- King Valley
- Great Western

KING VALLEY AND AUSTRALIAN PROSECCO

For Australian Prosecco, look no further than Victoria's King Valley wine region. Once a tobacco-growing region farmed by Italian immigrants, its cool climate, high altitude and rich soils have been a boon for grape growing. The region originally grew classic varieties, but now it's home to an exciting array of alternative varieties, including Prosecco, Arneis, Pinot Grigio, Sangiovese and Nebbiolo. The King Valley Prosecco Road tourism program is helping to firmly cement the King Valley's place on Australia's impressive wine map.

Otto Dal Zotto planted the first Prosecco vines in the King Valley. Its fresh, crisp palate proved instantly popular with those seeking a relaxed yet stylish celebratory drink. Since that first planting, four other King Valley winemakers have followed suit. Now, all five have joined forces to create 'Prosecco Road' – an exciting food and wine trail especially for lovers of this sparkling white.

Notable King Valley Prosecco producers include:

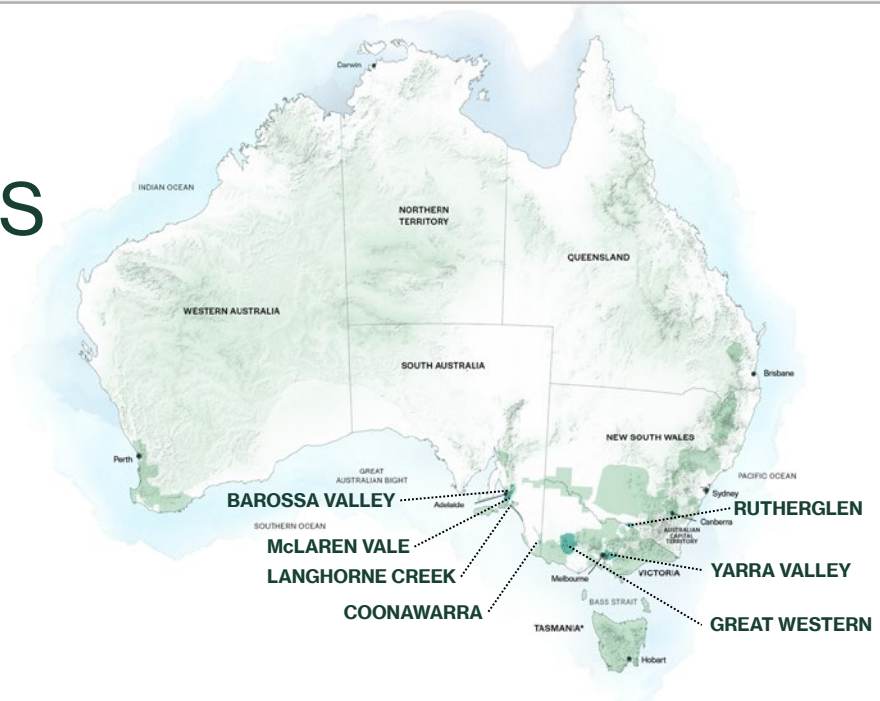
- Dal Zotto
- Brown Brothers
- Pizzini



DID YOU KNOW

Most Prosecco producers make their wines using the tank method, although there are bottle-fermented Proseccos as well.

SPARKLING RED REGIONS



DAZZLING SPARKLING RED REGIONS

South Australia

Because the Barossa Valley, McLaren Vale, Coonawarra, Limestone Coast and Langhorne Creek regions have a reputation for some of the world's richest and best Shiraz, it's no wonder that each of these areas produce robust-flavoured, premium examples of sparkling red wines.

Great Western

With its rich history of sparkling reds, the Great Western region still boasts some of Australia's best examples, which tend to be soft, spicy, complex and intense.

Yarra Valley

Several winemakers in the Yarra Valley produce lighter-bodied sparkling reds with Pinot Noir or Shiraz grapes.

Rutherglen

Although this region is famous for its fortified wines, Rutherglen also suits some Sparkling Shiraz, Cabernet Sauvignon and Durif, thanks to the grapes' ripeness and concentration.

DRINKING AND ENJOYING AUSTRALIAN SPARKLING WINE

The basics of bubbles

When you pour a glass of sparkling wine made from the traditional method, the bubbles should be fine and delicate and should rise in a continuous, steady stream to the top of the flute – this is known as the ‘bead’. When you taste it, the bubbles should burst in your mouth, with lots of crisp acidity and good length on the palate. The fizziness of the bubbles is called the ‘mousse’. Note that wines made via the tank method will have a foamier mousse. Sparkling wine alcohol content generally ranges from 9–14.5% ABV, although Moscato is much lower in alcohol, often starting at around 5%. Serve all sparkling wines chilled.

Opening sparkling wine under cork

1. Remove the foil and loosen the wire cage; you don't need to completely remove the cage as it can give you a better grip on the cork.
2. Hold the cork securely with one hand from the moment you loosen the cage.
3. Tilt the bottle at a 30 to 45 degree angle (away from you and others!) while still grasping the cork. Use your other hand to grip the bottom of the bottle.
4. Turn the bottle rather than the cork.
5. Hold the cork steady and ease it slowly out of the bottle; this will release the gas pressure without causing a huge popping noise or propelling the cork.
6. Keep an ice bucket handy to keep the remaining wine chilled.

Serving sparkling wine

The correct temperature to serve sparkling wine is 8–10°C (46.4–50°F), otherwise the wine may come streaming out of the bottle or explode.

Flute-shaped glasses enhance sparkling wine's bubbles – and their visual appeal – as the bubbles travel through more of the wine before bursting at the top of the glass. Flutes also enhance the wine's aromas, as the bouquet travels directly to the glass's narrow opening. While flutes are still most popular, there's an increasing preference to serve sparkling wine in a white wine glass. This can enhance the aromas. Whichever you choose, it's important to serve sparkling wine in immaculately clean glassware, otherwise the wine can appear flat. You should always hold a wine glass by its base or stem so you don't warm the wine with your hand.

FOOD PAIRINGS



FRESH OYSTERS



STRAWBERRIES



JAPANESE FOOD
INCLUDING SUSHI
AND SASHIMI



PRAWNS



COLD SMOKED
SALMON



FRITTATAS AND
VEGETABLE
TARTS



BRIGHT,
FRUIT-BASED
DESSERTS



VARIETY OF
CHEESES



PAELLA
(WITH SPARKLING ROSÉ)



ROAST TURKEY
(WITH SPARKLING RED)

FOOD PAIRING

Because many Australian sparkling wines are fine and delicate – excluding varieties like sparkling Shiraz – they serve as lovely aperitifs before a meal or pair nicely with the entrées, canapés and other light starters that come before bigger meals and richer foods. Oysters are the quintessential match, with strawberries another classic pairing. When enjoying with oysters or salmon, the seafood should also be chilled to match the chilled sparkling.

Umami

Sparkling wines pair well with certain dishes that have umami qualities. Umami is a Japanese word meaning ‘delicious’, ‘meaty’ or ‘savoury’. Some consider umami to be the fifth taste category on the tongue – after sweet, salty, sour and bitter. It’s common to savoury foods, such as mushrooms, meats and cheeses. Soy and seaweed also both display umami, so sparkling wines often match well with Japanese food.

Sparkling wines can provide a nice end to a meal, refreshing the palate and providing a crisp, light alternative alongside vibrant, fruit-based desserts and mild, creamy cheeses, such as triple-cream brie, camembert or brillat-savarin. Sparklings with some bottle age go well with meringue too.

For sparkling reds, complex flavours such as roast duck or turkey, mushrooms and truffles are ideal with aged vintage wines, especially those in which Pinot Noir is the dominant grape.



FUN FACT

The pressure inside a bottle of bubbles equates to three times the amount of pressure in an average car tyre.

THE BRILLIANCE OF AUSTRALIAN BUBBLES

With its sheer diversity of sparkling wine styles, bold and inventive sparkling winemakers and a culture that celebrates innovation, Australia is taking the global wine community by storm.



FROM THE SUBLIME TO THE FASCINATING

Australia's prestige sparkling wines are – on the whole – made from the classic grape varieties, planted on ancient soils, in high-altitude, cool-climate regions, and crafted in the time-honoured, time-consuming and labour-intensive traditional methods. They're refined, elegant and can be extraordinarily long-lived.

With demand on the rise, winemakers taking advantage of their fantastic cool-climate sites, and their stocks of reserve wines growing and maturing with each vintage, the outlook for Australian sparkling wine is indeed bright.

KEY POINTS TO REMEMBER

- Australia has a rich and storied history of sparkling winemaking that dates back to the 1880s.
- Today, sparkling wine represents a small but significant proportion of the Australian grape and wine community's total production, but it's a market niche for which there is excited consumer interest. Australia has truly taken its place among sparkling wine's elite.

- Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier are the predominant sparkling wine grapes.
- There are five common methods for producing sparkling wine: traditional method; transfer method; ancestral method; tank method; carbonation.
- Australia boasts three primary sparkling wine styles in dry brut, sparkling rosé and sparkling red. Sparkling Shiraz is a distinctly Australian style.
- Pét-nats, short for pétillants naturels, are effervescent, vibrant minimal-intervention sparklings that are making a big splash on the Australian wine scene.
- Australia's cool-climate regions, with their lower average temperatures, elevation and longer growing seasons, are ideal for producing sparkling wine. Regions producing exceptional wines include Tasmania, Adelaide Hills and the Yarra Valley.

Suggested timings

This module is designed to be taught in one to three 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	2 mins
The history and rise of sparkling wine in Australia	3 mins
How it's made	10 mins
Styles (including tasting)	15 mins
Australia's sparkling wine regions (including tasting)	15 mins
Drinking and enjoying sparkling wine	10 mins
Summary and class close	5 mins

THREE-HOUR CLASS

Topic	Time (mins)
Welcome and introduction	5 mins
The history and rise of sparkling wine in Australia	10 mins
How it's made	30 mins
Styles (including tasting)	50 mins
Break	15 mins
Australia's sparkling wine regions (including tasting)	50 mins
Drinking and enjoying sparkling wine	10 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.

- House of Arras 'Brut Elite' Tasmanian Sparkling
- Jansz 'Vintage Cuvée' Tasmanian Sparkling
- Deviation Road Adelaide Hills Sparkling
- Bird In Hand Adelaide Hills Sparkling Pinot Noir
- Chandon 'Late Disgorged' Yarra Valley Sparkling
- Dal Zotto 'Col Fondo' King Valley Prosecco
- Clover Hill Tasmanian Cuvée
- Rockford 'Black' Barossa Valley Sparkling Shiraz
- Heemskerk Tasmanian Chardonnay Pinot Noir sparkling
- House of Arras 'Grand Vintage' Tasmanian sparkling
- Yarra Burn 'Vintage' Yarra Valley Pinot Noir Chardonnay Pinot Meunier
- Kreglinger Tasmanian Brut rosé sparkling
- Primo Estate 'Joseph' McLaren Vale Sparkling Shiraz

A scenic landscape photograph featuring a vineyard in the foreground with lush green leaves and a wire fence. Beyond the vineyard is a wide expanse of rolling hills, some covered in dense green forest and others in golden-brown fields. A few small buildings are visible in the distance. The sky is filled with soft, white clouds.

THANK YOU

AUSTRALIAN WINE DISCOVERED