

The Rhône and Its Wines



Great Wine Terroirs, Fanet, 2004

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Insight Cruises
November 30, 2013
Somewhere on the Rhône

Outline

- Winetasting primer
- Short History of the Region
- Geography
- Geology
- Climate
- Grape Varieties
- Wines of the Rhône



Sensory Evaluation

Aspects of Wine Quality



- Color
- Aroma
- Taste
- Flavor
- Body
- Texture



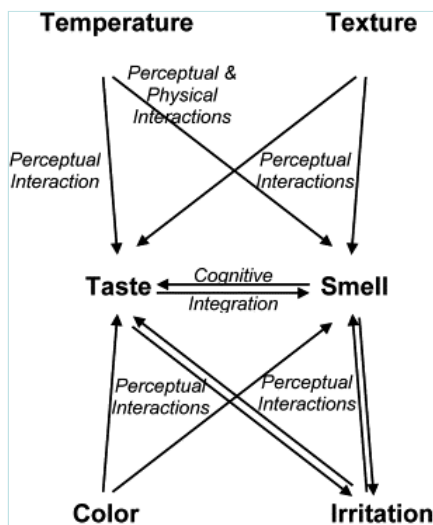
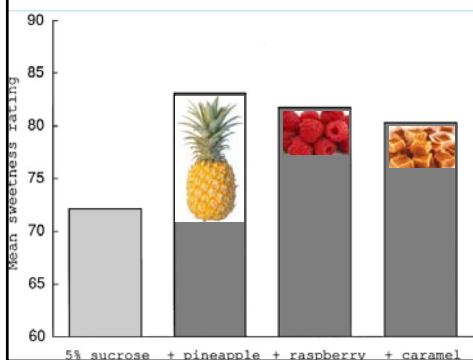
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Challenges: perception is complex

Delwiche, Food Quality and Preference, 2004

Prescott, Food Quality and Preference, 1999

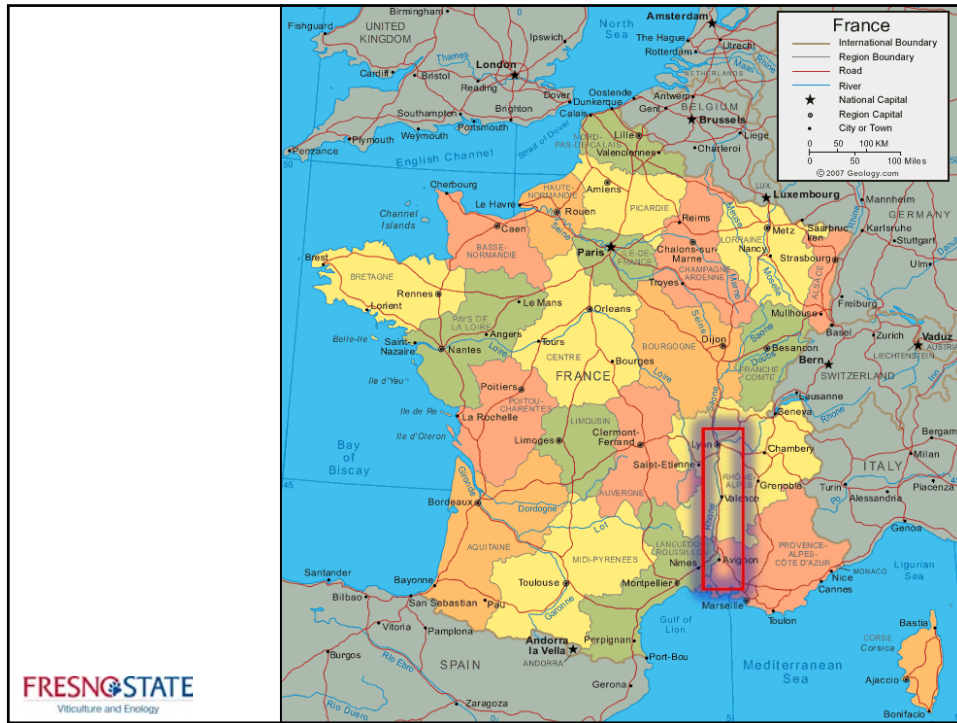
Research has shown that human perception is complex and experience is generally influenced by multiple inputs





Contributors to Wine Perception

- Grapes
- Processing
- Microbes
- Aging



The Wine Regions of France



Short History of Region

- 1600 BC: nomadic Ligurians lived in the area
- 600 BC: Celts and Phocaeans
 - Phocaeans likely introduced vines ~600 BC
- 100 BC-500 AD: Roman Empire
 - many vineyard areas that exist today first established by Romans
- 600-700 AD:
 - Age of the barbarians



By the sixth century the Western Roman Empire had been replaced by smaller kingdoms ruled by barbarian kings granting only nominal recognition to the Emperor.

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Short History of Region

- 700-1400: Holy Roman empire
 - Charlemagne and the Carolingian Empire
 - Catholic church a driving influence
 - Papacy located in Avignon 1309-1378
 - Maintained as part of papacy until 1791
- 1500-: Trade of Rhone wines increases
- 1863: Phylloxera hits area
- 1920s: Rhone wines gain respect
- 1930s: Appellation d'origine contrôlée (AOC)
 - Baron le Roy: Côtes du Rhône 1937



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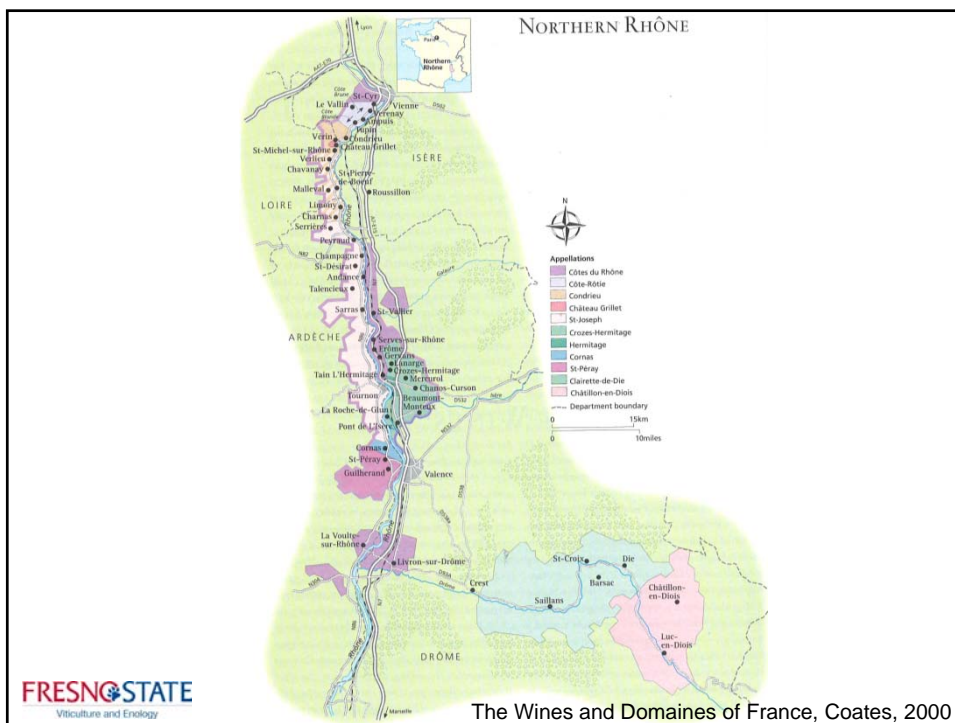
Geography/Climate/Geology

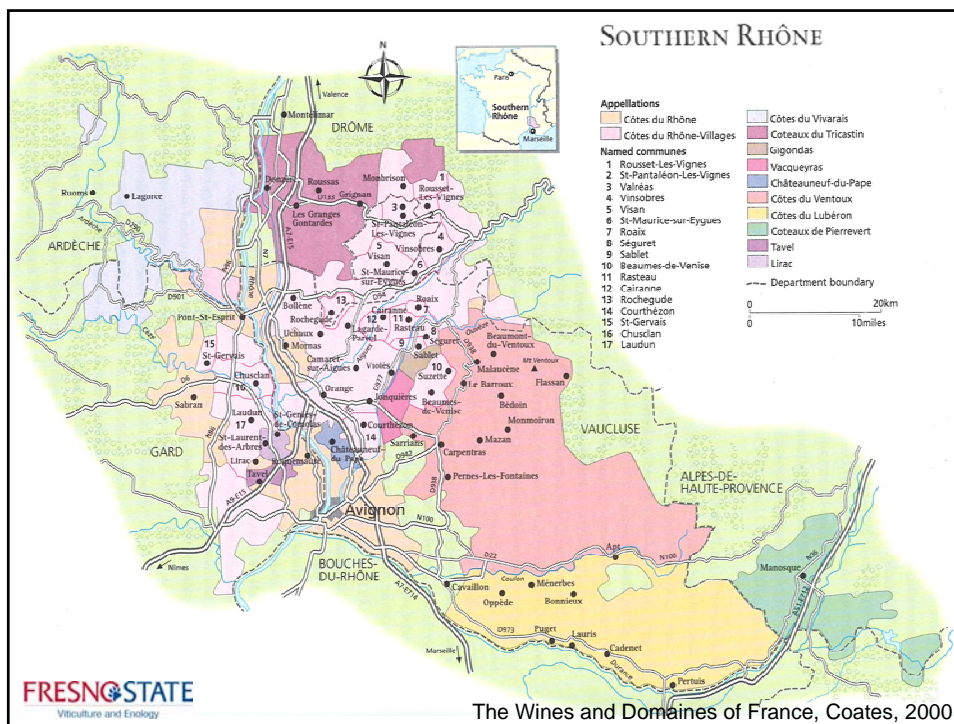
- Rhône Valley generally considered to be two separate regions (northern and southern)
- Geography:
 - Northern: Vienne to Valence
 - South – Southeastern facing slopes (sun exposure, Mistral)
 - Southern: Montelimar to Avignon
- Climate:
 - Northern: more continental
 - Southern: more Mediterranean
- Geology
 - Northern: Granitic
 - Southern: Alluvial/Sedimentary



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The Châteauneuf-du-Pape Wine Book, Karis, 2009





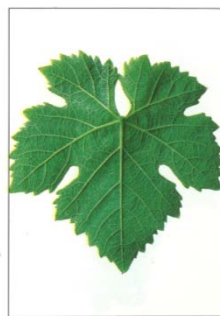
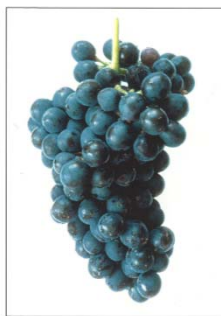
Grape Varieties

- Red varieties
 - Northern
 - Syrah
 - Southern
 - Grenache noir
 - Syrah
 - Mourvèdre
 - Cinsault
 - Cunoise



Syrah

- *aka* Shiraz, Sérine
- Northern Rhône Valley built on Syrah
- Grape variety originally thought to come from Persia
 - The offspring of two French varieties
- Other countries known for Syrah
 - Australia (Shiraz)
 - United States



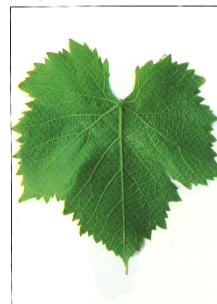
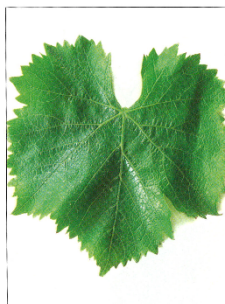
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SYRAH

Photo Pierre GALET

Grenache Noir

- Syn.: Garnacha
- Southern Rhône Valley built on Grenache Noir
- Other countries known for Grenache Noir
 - Spain



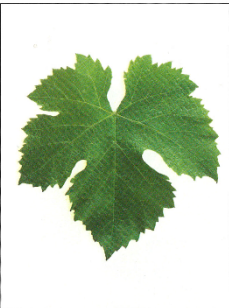

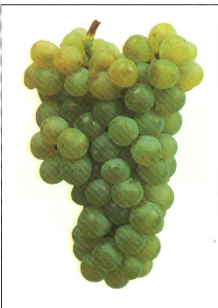

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GRENAICHE

Photo Pierre GALET

Viognier

- Northern Rhône Valley
 - Condrieu
- Other countries known for Viognier
 - United States
 - Australia







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VIIGNIER Photo: Pravin GATZ

Grape Varieties

- White Varieties
 - Northern
 - Viognier
 - Southern
 - Grenache blanc
 - Clairette
 - Roussanne
- Summary
 - Northern: two varieties
 - Southern: Up to 19 (white and red) are allowed



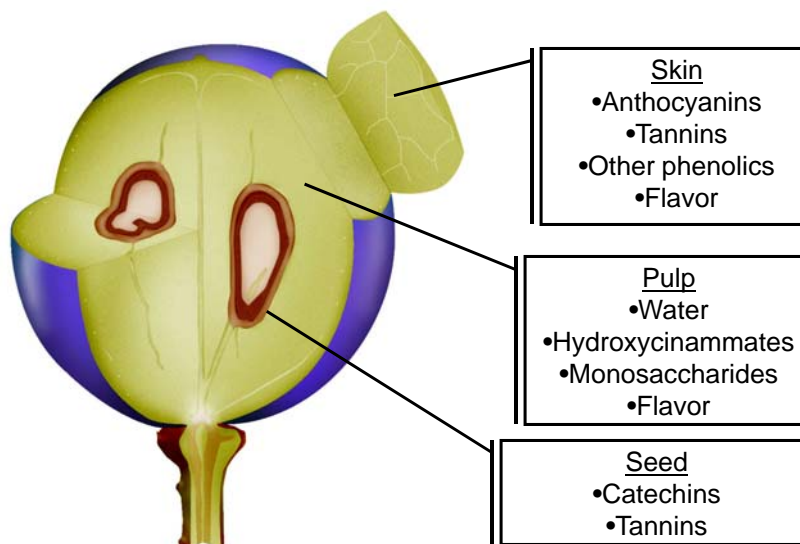
Wines



The Châteauneuf-du-Pape Wine Book
Karis, 2009

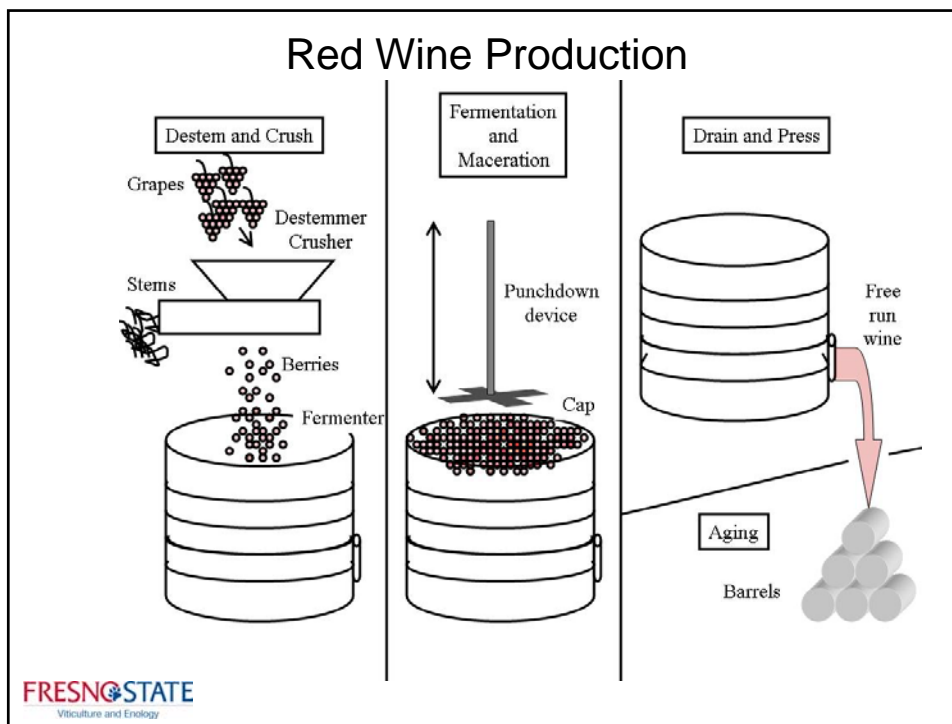


Grape Berry Composition



Australian Viticulture from text: "Ripening berries – a critical issue" by Dr. Bryan Coombe and Tony Clancy (Editor, *Australian Viticulture*), March/April 2001. Illustration by Jordan Koutroumanidis and provided by Don Neel *Practical Winery and Vineyard*





AOC Wines

- Four categories
 - Vin de Table
 - Vin de Pays
 - Vin Delimité de Qualité Supérieure (VDQS)
 - Vin d'Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC)
 - Permitted grape varieties, and proportions
 - Maximum yields
 - Vine age and planting density
 - Harvesting and vinification techniques
 - Level of alcohol in the finished wine
 - First growths and Grand Crus

Wine AOC Regions

- Northern
 - Right (west) bank:
 - Côte-Rôtie, Condrieu, Château-Grillet, Saint-Joseph, Cornas, Saint-Péray
 - Left (east) bank:
 - Hermitage, Crozes-Hermitage
- Southern
 - Right (west) bank:
 - Lirac, Tavel, Côtes du Rhône-Villages
 - Left (east) bank
 - Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Vacqueyras, Côtes du Rhône-Villages, Coteaux du Tricastin, Rasteau, Muscat de Beaumes-de-Venise
- Côtes du Rhône

Other Facts

- Rhône Valley wines are overwhelmingly red wine
- Wines produced in the Rhône Valley are second only to Bordeaux in total volume
- 95% of Rhône Valley wine production in the South

Wines of the Rhône

- Northern
 - Historically wines have been built to age
 - Longer soak times – 3 weeks common
 - Heavy extraction, massive structure
 - Two year aging in the barrel common
 - 10 years bottle aging before consumption common
 - Recent styles more approachable
 - Common descriptors
 - Green/black olive, smoked meat (bacon), black pepper, blackberry and other dark fruits

Wines of the Rhône

- Southern
 - Wines can be quite powerful
 - Fruit riper
 - Higher alcohol
 - Blend of varieties can bring increase in complexity
 - Common descriptors
 - Dry fruits (prune), earth, tar, chocolate, ripe black fruit

