

BC GUILD OF WINE JUDGES
December 2021
C2 DRY RED PINOT
Presented by Roger Ford (Mainland Chapter)

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES:

After completing this session, you should know:

1. The description and technical characteristics of the C2 Dry Red Pinot class;
2. The history of growing Pinot Noir;
3. Areas of the world that grow Pinot Noir;
4. Why Pinot Noir is a challenging grape to grow;
5. Typical descriptors of Pinot Noir;
6. Foods that pair well with Pinot Noir.

C2 DRY RED PINOT

Wines in the Dry Red Pinot Class must contain at least 85% of one or more of the following varieties: Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier, or Gamay Noir. These wines exhibit fruity attributes and may be at their peak when young. The best mature examples demonstrate complexity and finesse while retaining substantial fruit.

Varietal wines in the Dry Red Pinot Class must contain at least 85 % of one of the following varieties: Pinot Noir, Pinot Meunier or Gamay Noir.

Blended wines in the Dry Red Pinot Class must contain at least 85 % of two or more of the above varieties.

Aroma- earthy, Bing cherry, spice, plum, dry black cherry, resembling wilted roses.

Flavour – cherry, spice, raspberry, currant, barnyard notes, mushroom, along with earth, tar, herb and cola notes.

Complex, silky tannins, velvety mouthfeel and long finish.

Pinot Noir wines are typically pale in colour, translucent and their flavours are very subtle. The grape itself is prone to a variety of diseases and its genetics make it highly susceptible to mutation. Despite the difficulty in growing the grape the wine has no shortage of passionate adherents.

Pinot Meunier: Somewhat light in colour and body. Strawberry, black currant, plum, raspberry, blueberry in the flavour. This grape is one of the main ingredients in Champagne.

Gamay Noir: Violet, rose petal, cherry, strawberry, raspberry aromas and flavour.

Technical Characteristics:

Ingredients: Grapes

Alcohol: 11%-16%

Colour: Medium Red to Garnet

Sugar 0.0% - 1%

Specific Gravity: 0.990 - 0.995

Acidity: 5.0g/L - 6.7g/L

pH: 3.4 - 4.0

HISTORY:

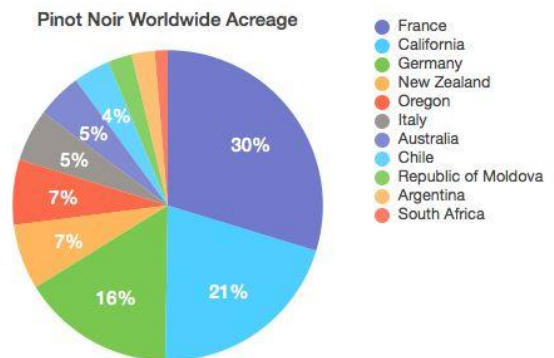
With evidence of vines planted by the Celts prior to 200 B.C. and Roman soldiers growing grapes dating back to the first century, Burgundy was recognized early on as premier real estate for growing grapes. Yet, like many burgeoning European wine regions, it was the Medieval monasteries that deserve primary credit for cultivating the region's scholastic vineyards through the Middle Ages. They quickly recognized Burgundy's epic influence and along with the dominating force of the regional *terroir*, the Benedictine and Cistercian monks served to identify and define the most ambitious vineyard locations of the region. These vineyards were destined to become some of the wine world's most prized grape-growing possessions. While honing viticultural techniques and traditions, the combined efforts of these monks laid much of the groundwork for Burgundy's modern wine scene. It wasn't until the French Revolution that the ownership of Burgundy's vineyards transferred from the church and aristocratic circles to individuals in segmented blocks of land. The region's vineyards were further fragmented when the new Napoleonic Code instituted a process by which all inherited land must be divided equally among heirs. To this day it is not unusual to find a 120-acre vineyard owned by 80+ growers, with as little as several rows of vines under the ownership of a single grower. Growing out of a need to coordinate production and marketing, the position of *negociant* evolved- a collective house that buys regional wines typically by the barrel, to blend with other wines from the same appellation.

The quality of *Bourgogne*, in particular, is due to many factors. Its vineyards slope gently down toward the East, providing the vines with long sun exposure while avoiding the afternoon heat. The soil there is very calcareous (chalky; containing calcium carbonate), offering good drainage. Well-drained soils have a higher average temperature, which assists ripening. Pinot Noir seems to reflect more pronounced *Gout de Terroir*, or flavour of the soil, than other black grape types, making vineyard site selection critical.

Recognized worldwide as a 'noble' wine grape, Pinot Noir is grown in many locations around the world, from Algeria to the United States, and has many aliases, from Blauburgunder to Burgundac to Pinot Nero to Clevner. Some of the best examples come from Argentina, Burgundy (of course), California, Chile, Germany, Italy, New Zealand and Oregon. (chart courtesy of ***PinotFile***)*

Worldwide Pinot Noir acreage is about 290,000 acres.
 U.S. Pinot Noir acreage is about 73,600 acres.
 Burgundy Pinot Noir acreage is about 26,000 acres of which about half is in the Cote d'Or.

COUNTRY/STATE	PINOT NOIR ACREAGE
FRANCE	55,000
CALIFORNIA	38,049
GERMANY	29,500
NEW ZEALAND	12,595
OREGON	12,560
ITALY	10,082
AUSTRALIA	8,693
CHILE	7,127
REPUBLIC OF MOLDOVA	4,600
ARGENTINA	4,450
SOUTH AFRICA	2,520



THE GRAPE

Pinot Noir is a red wine grape of the species *Vitis Vinifera*. The Pinot grape does not like extremes of hot or cold climates and grows best in regions with warm days and cool evenings. It thrives in well-drained chalky soils where it can produce wines which require long ageing and exhibit complex fragrances. Pinot Noir clusters look like a black pinecone, from which it gets its name: Pinot (Pine) and Noir (Black).

Pinot Noir, while widely considered to produce some of the finest wines on the planet, is also one of the hardest to cultivate and transform into wine. Pinot Noir tends to produce narrow trunks and vines. In the vineyard it is sensitive to light exposure, cropping levels (must be low yield), soil types and pruning techniques. In the winery, it is sensitive to fermentation methods, yeast strains and is highly influenced by its terroir, with different regions producing significantly different wines. Its thin skin and tight fruit clusters make it highly susceptible to bunch rot and other fungal diseases. The vines themselves are prone to downy mildew, leaf roll and fanleaf virus, which makes the grape difficult to grow.

Nearly every affliction known to affect vines is common among Pinot Noir vineyards. Although somewhat tolerant of cold climates, it is particularly susceptible to spring frosts, because it is one of the earliest-leafing varieties. The sharpshooter leafhopper finds Pinot Noir a perfect host. This bug carries Pierce's Disease, which can destroy an entire vineyard in as little as three years. Leaf-roll virus is prevalent in almost all Pinot Noir plantings over ten years old. The Pinot

vines are not very vigorous and often lack adequate leaf cover to protect the fruit from birds, which do much damage. Even if the grapes survive the birds, if not picked promptly at maturity, the thin-skinned and tender berries shrivel and dry out rapidly resulting in a raisiny aroma and neutral flavour.

Typical Descriptors:

Colour

Pinot Noir ranges from pale to deep burgundy red with older wines more brick coloured. The grape's colour when young may be compared to garnet and is much lighter than that of other red wines. Some emerging Pinots from other regions of the world, however, are more fruit-forward and darker in colour, notably California and New Zealand.

Aromas

The wide range of aromas that Pinot Noir produces, depends largely on terroir. Those aromas can range from truffles and meatiness in Burgundy to mocha and coffee in California. Traditional red Burgundy is famous for its fleshy farmyard quality, with aromas of black cherry, raspberry or currant.

Other aromas to look for: beetroot, blackberry, pepper, cinnamon, cranberry, herbs, lavender, licorice, mint, perfume, plum, spice and violets. Bottle-aged Pinots may produce bacon, earthy (terroir), prune, tobacco leaf, vanilla, nuts, oak and hay.

Body

Pinot Noir from Burgundy tends to be light to medium-bodied, rich, 12-13% ABV (alcohol) with well-balanced acids and tannins. New world Pinot Noir, however, can be 13-14%, sometimes even as high as 15% ABV.

Flavours

Some prominent flavours include raspberries or strawberries when young and licorice when older. Cranberries, violets, mushrooms (black truffles), game, "forest floor" even compost or manure.

Food Pairings

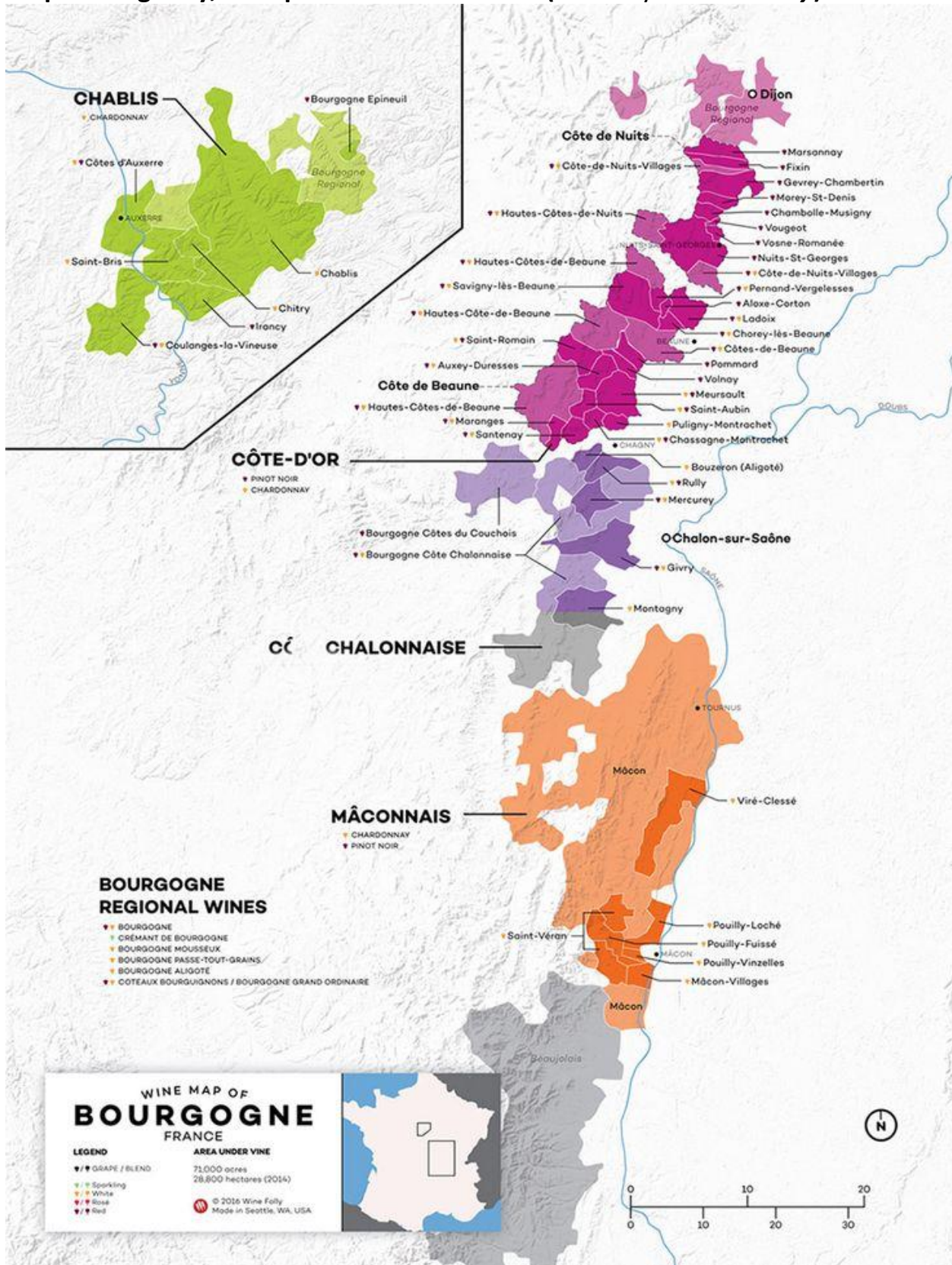
Pinot Noir's greatest strength is its suppleness. Without the hard tannic structure found in many red wines, it pairs effortlessly with a wide range of foods – mushrooms, salmon, tuna, chicken, game birds, pork, grilled beef and lamb. Don't overwhelm its gentle fruit and refined complexity with strong or spicy flavours, simply prepared dishes are best.

Young, fruity Pinot Noir would pair well with Brie and other fresh soft-ripened cheeses, while older Pinots could easily pair with cheddar, semi-hard goat's cheese, dry Jack, aged Gouda, Gruyère, Comté or Monterey Jack.

The Flight:

This flight of nine, focuses on BC Pinot Noir, and compares them to examples from the old world and South America. Please pay attention to issues of acid/sugar and sugar/tannin balance.

Map of Burgundy, the epicentre of Pinot Noir (courtesy of *Wine Folly*)**



*Major World Pinot Noir plantings - *princeof pinot.com* (pinotfile)

**Map of Burgundy - *winefolly.com*

(limited) **Bibliography**

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research also included conversations with Sam Hauck and Axel Kroitzsch,
previous guild notes, and reference to the BCGWJ Handbook