

Fortified Wines

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Definition: Fortified Wine

Wine to which alcoholic spirit has been added to increase the alcohol content to between 15% and ~22%

Definition, continued

Can be dry or sweet
Can be red or white, rosé or brown

What is fortifying spirit?

Generally, wine that has been distilled in order to concentrate the alcohol

Fortifying spirit

Alcohol for fortifying ranges from 85% ("Brandy Spirit") to 96% ("High Proof")

Origin of the word "Brandy"

brandewijn - "Burnt (distilled) Wine"

Traditionally this made from lower quality wines, often hard pressings

The two most important styles:

Sherry
Port

SHERRY

Always starts out as a DRY white wine;
i.e., fortification occurs after the wine has fermented to dryness

PORT

Always starts out as a SWEET red wine (with the minor exception of white port);
i.e., fortifying spirit is added in sufficient quantity to arrest fermentation

SHERRY

SHERRY

One of the oldest named wine styles in the world

SHERRY

Name comes from the Spanish town of Jerez de la Frontera, which comes from the Moorish "Sherris"

SHERRY

This is one of the hottest fine wine regions in the world

The main grape - *Palomino* - is about as neutral a grape as you can get

SHERRY

"Palomino happens to produce a potentially great style of wine, but it is not an inherently great grape"

- Jancis Robinson

The other two grapes - *Pedro Ximenez* and *Moscatel* - are also fairly neutral and are used for sweetening wine

SHERRY

To make wine for sweetening, these grapes are traditionally left in the sun to shrivel, then fermented only a bit to leave lots of residual sugar.

Nowadays it is much more common to dry the grapes in plastic tunnels, press out the juice, then fortify it to prevent fermentation.

SHERRY

These wines are further concentrated by being stored in ullaged barrels in hot, dry warehouses

SHERRY

Main styles of Sherry:

Fino
Amontillado
Oloroso
Cream

SHERRY

The first two are made with the Flor Process, the second two without action of surface yeast

SHERRY

FINO: pale straw color, very delicate aroma of yeast, bread dough, almond, apple;
Always dry unless you have a poor example

Fino Sherry

It must be bought from a store that has a lot of turnover, and consumed within a week of opening

SHERRY

AMONTILLADO: light honey to amber color; dry to off-dry; aroma of hazelnuts, walnuts.

SHERRY

OLOROSO: can be dry or more commonly sweet; the sweet version has added sweetening wines.

The best tend to be dry.
Gold to brown in color; nutty, sometimes fruity aroma; complex, almost velvety in the mouth.

SHERRY

CREAM: Oloroso-based, with lots of *PX* or *Moscatel* added to darken it and sweeten it.

Anything goes for the color.
Probably the most imitated sherry style;
Easy to hide cheap grapes in it by hyperoxidation

SHERRY

Sherry is never vintage-dated.
Why?

SHERRY

Sherry is probably the most under-priced wine style in the world.

SHERRY

Pay careful attention to serving temperature;
Do not serve in tiny wine glasses ("liqueur" glasses) - INAOs are perfect.

PORT

PORT

Gets its name from the city of Porto in the north of Portugal.

PORT

The main grapes are not common outside of northern Portugal:

Touriga
Tinta Cão
Tinta Roriz

PORT

How it's made:

- extractive techniques --treading
- pressing when 3-4% alcohol is produced followed by immediate fortification
(brandy spirit is best)
- after clarification, aging in large oak casks or tanks

PORT

Main styles of Port:

Ruby
Tawny
Vintage

PORT

RUBY: Aged in wood or tank for only 2-3 years. Pale to mid red color.

Dominated by young, fresh aromas; palate of alcohol and sweet fruit.
Ready to drink.

PORT

TAWNY: Aged in wood for longer than ruby, while undergoing gradual oxidation. Often from lighter, less intense grapes. The best show lots of ages. Color ranges from ruby to pale brown. Aroma (of aged tawnies) is of delicate fruit, dried fruits, butterscotch, vanilla, chocolate, nuts...Ready to drink when bottled.

PORT

VINTAGE: Made from the best wines in the best vintages. Bottled young, while dense and tannic. Must be aged for many years. Aroma of black fruits, prune, tobacco, licorice, smoke...

PORT

Only Vintage Ports and most Rubies are made from a single year's wine. Only Vintage Ports and their derivatives are vintage-dated.

PORT

Tawnies often have an "average age" designation -- 10, 15, 20, 30 years