

THE GLASSHOUSE

WINE APPRECIATION SOCIETY

MODULE 3

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

The world's most famous grape and most widely grown – until the 1990s - Cabernet Sauvignon is important in that it sets a style that is much imitated in warmer climates around the world. (Merlot overtook Cabernet Sauvignon as the most prolific red grape variety in the 1990s).

Cabernet Sauvignon is driving a worldwide growth in powerful wines that can be aged. From Bulgaria to Australia and in places where there is warmth and a long growing season. But most famously from Bordeaux. The grape behind the great 'clarets', Napa Valley's finest wines and Coonawara's best. But it is also the bedrock of cheaper wines from the south of France, Australia, South Africa and Chile.



Interestingly though it is a relatively 'new' grape. It took until 1997 and DNA profiling for the origins of this grape to be finally settled. The University of California proved that the grape derives from Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc. An accidental crossing that happened back in the mists of time in a vineyard in Bordeaux. As Jancis Robinson notes in the Oxford Companion to Wine. 'This neatly explains why cabernet sauvignon can smell like either or both of its parents, and why Cabernet Franc is mentioned in wine literature long before Cabernet Sauvignon, and was already well established in Bordeaux by the end of the 18th century.'

Cabernet Sauvignon only began to be grown in significant quantities, however, at the end of 18th century when the great estates which we recognise today were established in Bordeaux. It was then that growing wines for greater longevity became important and this was and is a major characteristic of the grape.

GRAPE DESCRIPTION

The distinguishing marks of the Cabernet Sauvignon berry are its small size, its high ratio of pip to pulp and the thickness of its skins, so distinctively blue as opposed to red or even purple, on the vine. The pips are a major factor in Cabernet Sauvignon's high tannin level while the thickness of its skins accounts for the depth of colour that is a tell-tale sign of a Cabernet Sauvignon in so many blind tastings – as well as the variety's relatively good resistance to rot.



ARGENTINA

DON DAVID RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON

A fabulous example of an Argentinean cabernet sauvignon. We have been selling the wines from this estate for over 10 years and they are always very well made. This wine is grown at high altitude and exhibits a real fruity characteristic.



CHILE

ECHEVERRIA CABERNET SAUVIGNON

We have been selling the wines from the Echeverria family for almost 20 years and this is a great example for a Chilean cabernet sauvignon from the region close to Santiago.

AUSTRALIA

BERTON RESERVE COONAWARRA CABERNET SAUVIGNON

A fully rounded Aussie cab sauv. 'Fair dinkum wines' as they call them. Bob Berton has set up his business in recent years but has been in the wine trade for many more. State of the art wine making facilities.



SOUTH AFRICA

GROOT CONSTANTIA CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Wines have been grown on this estate to the east of Table Mountain since 1686. The high South African temperature make a very distinct wine