



## Wine Regionality

For some people, wine comes in two types – white or red. For most of us, wine is a little more complicated with the biggest consideration being the grape varieties – Riesling, Chardonnay, Shiraz, Cabernet, Sauvignon and so on. More knowledgeable wine lovers also have a vital interest in the region where the wine's grapes are grown, so they seek out Semillon from the Hunter Valley, Chardonnay from the Yarra Valley, Shiraz from the Barossa Valley and Cabernets from the Margaret River or Coonawarra, for example.

It is a delight to compare wines from the same grape, vintage and price range but from different regions as the origin of the grapes can generally be tasted in the wine.

When you consider the combinations of the various grapes and the many regions, there is a huge choice. How does the origin of the grape affect the taste? Climate plays a huge role in the way the vines grow and their grapes ripen and develop their flavours. Europeans consider climate to be important but only one of several factors which include soil type, the angle of the slope of the vineyard to the sun and so on. The French call the sum of all these influences "Terroir", meaning that it tastes strongly of origin.

Over the centuries of wine making in Europe, the regions have developed distinctive tastes. The characteristics are usually embodied in local laws. The law is often referred to by the French term *appellation*. *Appellation* has passed into English, especially in the wine trade where it means the defined region of a

product's origin.

In Australia, new laws have been introduced which require the origin of the wine to appear on the label and the term *appellation* occurs frequently. Australian producers were pretty free with what they put on their labels. The specified grape variety or region or district must make up 80% of the wine; this in turn meaning that 20% of the wine could be of unstated region or grape.

The new laws, which have seen the use of European place names like Moselle, Port, Champagne, Claret, Sherry and so on phased out, has seen the 20% rule changed to 15%. For example, a wine labelled simply Cabernet Sauvignon may have up to 15% Shiraz.

In a blend the rule is that the majority grape must be named first; that is why you see Chardonnay-Semillon as well as Semillon-Chardonnay. It is also compulsory to state where in Australia the grapes were grown, and the regional names must be from an approved list of defined regions.

A blend of wines from Coonawarra, Mt Gambier and the Murray Valley could be labelled "product of South Australia"; if the blend included grapes from the nearby Great Western area in Victoria, it would be "product of South Eastern Australia". A blend from far-reaching areas such as the Hunter Valley, McLaren Vale and the Murray Valley would be "product of Australia".

The authority in control of the new regulations is the Geographical Indications Committee. A map of Australian regions and a folder of information on the Committee is available.

## Law Council Welcomes Federal Government High Court Recommendation

The Law Council of Australia welcomes the federal government's recommendation that the Honourable Justice Kenneth Madison Hayne be appointed as a Justice of the High Court of Australia.

"Justice Hayne's practice as a barrister was at the very highest level including cases of national importance", says Acting President of the LCA, Mr Bret Walker SC.

"Additionally, his experience as a Judge of the Supreme Court of Victoria – and as a Judge of Appeal – makes him eminently suitable for the position."

"His experience at the Bar and on the Bench in complex commercial matters is particularly welcome."

Justice Hayne is very well-qualified – both in academic terms and in experience – for this extraordinarily responsible position, and the Law Council look forward to his distinguished contribution to the High Court."

"The Law Council looks forward with interest to the two further appointments to the High Court which must be made within the next nine months."

"Additionally, the Law Council applauds the depth and seriousness with which the Attorney-General consulted the profession about this appointment."

### BALANCE

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