

BEGINNER HOW TO READ A WINE LABEL

DESIGNATIONS AND THEIR IMPORTANCE

In the Old World, there are a number of distinctions that designate a wine's origin and quality. The following chart will assist:

Italy	DOCG	Denominazione di Origine Ctrrollata e Garantita (guaranteed place name)
Italy	DOC	Denominazione di Origine CXotrollata (protected place name)
Italy	ITGT	Indicazion Geografica Tipica (Typical place name)
Italy	Vini di tavola	Table wines
France	AOC	Vins d'Appellation d'Origine Controlee (Appellation of controlled Origin)
France	VDQS	Vin Delimites de Qualite Superieure (Wines of superior quality)
France	Vins de Pays	Country Wines
France	Vins de Table	Table Wines
France	Premier cru Classe	Status refers to a classification of wines primarily from the Bordeaux region
France	Premier cru Superieur	Status refers to a classification of wines primarily from the Bordeaux region
France	Premier Grand Cru Classe	The highest category for French wines classified in the Appellation of Saint Emilion
Spain	dO	Denominacion de Origen (Denomination of Origin)
Spain	DOC	Denominacion de origen Calificada (Denomination of Qualified Origin)
Spain	Gran Reserva	Aged a minimum of 5 years
Spain	Reserva	Aged a minimum of 3 years
Spain	Crianza	Aged a minimum of 2 years
Portugal	DOC	Vinho de Calidad (Quality wine produced in a geographically limited region subject to strict regulations)
Portugal	IPR or VQPRD	Indica'õ de Prveni'ncia Regulamnetada (Wines from newer regions that are candidates for DOC status. Although created in 1990 to designate wines of "intermediate" quality, this classification is not typically used anymore.)
Portugal	VR	Vinho Regional (Regional wines that do not adhere to the same strict regulations as IPR or DOXC classifies wines)
Portugal	CVR	Wines produced in a specific region from at least 85% of locally grown grapes

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Portugal	Vinho de Mesa	Table wines
Portugal	VEQPRD	Sparkling Wine produced in a demarcated region
Germany	QMP	Qualitätswein mit Prädikat (Quality wine with special Attributes)
Germany	Kabinett	The first of the Prädikat wines in Germany, this is typically the lightest and most delicate style that an estate will produce
Germany	Spätlese	German for late harvested, Spätlese has more richness and body than Kabinett because the grapes are allowed to ripen for an extra week or more. Once harvested, the wine can be fermented fruity (Lieblich), half dry (Halbtrocken) or dry (Trocken) depending on the preferences of the winemaker.
Germany	Auslese	Grapes specifically selected during harvest, cluster by cluster. Often made in the fruity style with residual sweetness, considered the finest of achievements by winemakers.
Germany	Beerenauslese	A rare dessert wine made from extremely overripe grapes that are fully affected by botrytis mold. The grapes are selected one berry at a time.
Germany	Eiswein	Literally, ice wine. Made from overripe grapes that have frozen solid on the vine.
Germany	QBA	Qualitätswein Bestimmter Anbaugebiete (Quality Wine from Specific Appellations.)
Germany	Deutscher Landwein	Superior Table Wine
Germany	Deutscher Tafelwein	Superior Table Wine

OTHER TERMS THAT CAN BE FOUND ON A LABEL

Bottling and Winery Information terms can be cumbersome at least, and confusing at best. The following will outline the meanings of some of this additional detail.

Estate Bottled or Chateau Bottled

100% of the grapes used were grown in the winery's own vineyards or came from vineyards controlled by the winery in the same appellation. These wines must be vinified and bottled at the winery as well.

Grown, Produced, and Bottled By

Indicates that the grapes were grown at the winery's vineyards (or vineyards controlled by the winery) and that the wine was vinified and bottled at the winery.

Produced and Bottled By

The winery crushed, fermented and bottled at least 75% of the wine in that particular bottling, but not that the winery grew the grapes.

Made and Bottled By

A minimum 10% of the wine was fermented at the winery. The remaining 90% could be from other sources. This designation does not generally indicate the quality implied by the phrase "Produced and Bottled By".

Bottled By

This alone on a label indicates that the only role the winery most likely played in the wine's production was to purchase and bottle wine made somewhere else.

READING THE LABEL'S CONTENTS

Now that you are aware of the contents of a label created in either Old or New World, the following examples should offer practical application. (See examples 1-4)