

## BRASILIAN MERLOT



The secret to the success of the Merlot grape in Brazil firstly involves adapting the grape to the location, type of soil, climate and all the conditions involved in growing the grape. In this regard, Merlot's relationship with Brazil is going very well, so much so that it is said that it is becoming the emblematic grape of Brazilian wines, just as Malbec is for Argentina or Carménère for Chile.

In reality, success has been achieved above all by Merlots produced specifically in the Vineyard Valley, the largest and most traditional wine region in Brazil and where a large part of the vineyards has been producing for more than two decades, enough time for this adaptation and for the vineyards to manage adequate productivity to obtain grapes of the highest quality.

Vineyard Valley is known for its high levels of rainfall, which vary from harvest to harvest and which, in the rainiest years, harms the full ripening of many varieties, such as Cabernet Sauvignon. Merlot has some characteristics that make it suffer less from this climate condition.

Merlot is more resistant and ripens earlier than most other red varieties, being ready for harvest before periods of greater rainfall, which favors the full maturation of all the important elements of a good wine, such as sugar, polyphenols and anthocyanins, which are what give wine its color.

There is also the know-how of the producers, who already accumulate knowledge and experience about this relationship between the Merlot grape and the land, which combined with the appropriate production techniques, generates wines of the highest quality and, what is better, with Brazilian personality.

All of this together means that it is possible to make good wines from this variety in practically every vintage. In those where nature is prodigal, bringing dry and sunny weather, such as the mythical 2005 harvest, then we are treated to truly fantastic Brazilian Merlots.

In all vintages, they are always very pleasant wines to drink. The palate is soft due to very round tannins. Typical of Merlot is good acidity, which with good ripening of the grapes is very well balanced with moderate alcohol, around 12% to 13%. The three characteristics together allow you to drink young and well-balanced wines, when they show fruit aromas, such as cherries and plums mixed with spices and toast, when matured in wood.

Contrary to what many believe, Brazilian wines age very well, especially Merlots. The tripod of tannins, acidity and alcohol allows the wine to remain evolving in the bottle for a long time, revealing after a few years wines that are still fresh, exchanging fresh fruits for dried ones and jams.

## **Denomination of Origin Vineyard Valley**

The Vineyard Valley Denomination of Origin, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, is the first in Brazil and in the wine classification system there are several acronyms that indicate the geographical origin or, in other words, the origin of a label, with the most common: Indication of Origin (IP), Denomination of Origin (DO) and Denomination of Controlled Origin (DOC).

Indication of Origin (IP) refers to the location, region, city, state or country that produces the wine and is not related to geological, physiographic or human characteristics, taking into account the fame or reputation of the place as a wine producer.



Denomination of Origin (DO) refers to the location, region, city, state or country that produces the wine and is related to the geological, physiographic or human characteristics that are found in that environment. The entire production process is subject to rigorous control in all its phases, from planting the grapes in the vineyard to the final product that reaches the consumer.

Controlled Denomination of Origin (DOC), in addition to the characteristics mentioned in the Denomination of Origin (DO), seeks to ensure the quality of local wines and establishes the recommended grape varieties, winemaking methods, minimum alcohol content, yield per hectare and the aging periods in barrels, tanks, barrels and or bottles. The classification system is used in countries in Europe, such as France, Italy, Portugal, Spain, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Romania,

Austria and the United Kingdom, in South Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, Chile, the United States of America and Brazil and in each country, there may be a variation in the classification system pyramid.

For example, in France there is the Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée (AOC) which is equivalent to the Denomination of Controlled Origin (DOC).

In Italy, one level above the Denomination of Origin (DO) there is the Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita or Denomination of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin (DOCG).

The Vineyard Valley, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul located in the extreme south of Brazil, is one of the most important wine growing regions in Brazil. Located approximately 120 km from the capital Porto Alegre, it covers a triangle formed by the municipalities of Bento Gonçalves, to the northeast, Monte Belo do Sul, to the northwest, and Garibaldi, to the south.

The first Italian immigrants arrived in the Vineyard Valley region in 1875 and settled in Bento Gonçalves. The immigrants brought their knowledge of grape cultivation and wine production.

The climate, warm mornings with good sun exposure, cool afternoons and nights, combined with an average altitude of 742 meters above sea level, offers the fundamental characteristics for the good development of the vines.



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Sparkling wines are the big star of the Vineyard Valley. These are wines recognized for their distinction, being more elegant and fresher than most examples made in South America.

Currently, the Vineyard Valley is recognized for the quality of its wines and is a leader in national production, with around 85% of production concentrated in this region.

One of the best and most prestigious producers in Vineyard Valley is Vallontano noble wines by winemaker Luís Henrique Zanini and its sparkling wines are among the best in Brazil and the world.

The Denomination of Origin (DO) Vineyard Valley was the first regulated Denomination of Origin in Brazil.

The process began in 2002, when the region obtained an Indication of Origin (IP) registration from INPI (National Institute of Industrial Property). Ten years later, in 2012, Aprovale (Association of Fine Wine Producers of the Vineyard Valley) had its request for a Denomination of Origin (DO) recognized.

To achieve recognition of the Denomination of Origin (DO), long and arduous work was required by Vineyard Valleys producers, which involved agronomic and enological characterization, the integration of soil, climate and wine response data to natural conditions, for

the selection of excellent production conditions, together with the elaboration of usage regulations and control regulations.

The Denomination of Origin (DO) Vineyard Valley covers an area of 72.45 square kilometers located in the municipalities of Bento Gonçalves, Garibaldi and Monte Belo do Sul, in the state of Rio Grande do Sul, where grapes must be exclusively cultivated and the production of wines. region, giving rise to excellent white wines and excellent sparkling wines. As well as the red varieties Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Tannat.

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Fine still white and red wines are regulated, as well as fine sparkling wines. In white wines from the Denomination of Origin (DO) Vineyard Valley, the Chardonnay grape is mandatory, which can be cut with the Italic Riesling grape and in red wines, the use of the Merlot grape is mandatory, which can be cut with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Tannat.

In sparkling wines, Chardonnay and or Pinot Noir grapes are mandatory and must be produced exclusively using the Traditional Method, also known as the Champenoise Method or Classic Method, where the second fermentation takes place in the bottle. Sparkling wines can be found in Nature, Extra-brut or Brut types.

The Denomination of Origin (DO) Vineyard Valley regulates that white wines undergo a minimum aging period of six months, in the case of red wines the aging period is twelve months and for sparkling wines they must undergo a minimum period of nine months in contact with the yeasts, in the foaming phase. Labels that go through wood must age exclusively in oak barrels.

### **Recognized Products and Companies**

**Almaúnica Winery** - Almaúnica Reserve Merlot, Almaúnica Merlot Part 2 and Almaúnica Part 2 Chardonnay Super Premiun.

**Valduga House** - Valduga House Chardonnay Gran Reserve.

Dom Cândido Winery - Dom Cândido Documento Brut, Dom Cândido Documento Merlot, Dom Cândido Documento Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon and Dom Cândido Reserva Bob Jr.

**Don Laurindo Wines** - Don Laurindo Reserve Merlot, Don Laurindo Chardonnay, Don Laurindo Assemblage and Doracy Chardonnay.

**Miolo Wine Group** - Lot 43, Merlot Terroir, Cuvée Giuseppe Merlot/Cabernet Sauvignon, Cuvée Giuseppe Chardonnay, Sparkling Miolo Millésime Brut, Sparkling Miolo Millésime Brut Rosé, Iride Surlie Nature, Sparkling Miolo Cuvée Nature, Sparkling Miolo Cuvée Brut Rosé and Sparkling Miolo Cuvée Brut.

**Pizzato** - Pizzato Merlot de Merlots, Pizzato Concentus, Pizzato DNA99, Pizzato Chardonnay, Pizzato Legno, Pizzato Brut White, Pizzato Brut Rosé and Pizzato Nature.

**Peculiare Fine Wines** - Peculiare Merlot.

**Terragnolo Winery** - Terragnolo Merlot and Terragnolo Merlot Calhaus.

**Stone Cave Winery** - Cave de Pedra Sparkling Brut White.

**Larentis Wines** - Merlot Portion 1.1 Vineyard Santa Lúcia and Chardonnay Arcangelo.

**Aurora Winery** - Merlot Gioia.

**Dom Eliziário** - Capela dos Vinhedos Merlot.

**Dom Bernardo Winery** - Chardonnay Ispirato.

## **The Wines**

Varietal wines: minimum of 85% of the main variety for red Merlot and for white Chardonnay.

Assemblages: for reds, at least 60% of the wine must be Merlot, which can be complemented with Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Tannat. For white wines, at least 60% must be Chardonnay, which can be complemented with Italic Riesling.

Sparkling wines: Chardonnay and or Pinot Noir base wine, at least 60% of its composition, which can be complemented by Italic Riesling. Sparkling wines can only be made using the traditional method, with bubbles appearing in a natural process through fermentation in the bottle itself.