Edited on 22/06/2020

Merlot N



Name of vine variety in France

Merlot

Origin

This variety is originally from the Bordeaux vineyards. Based on genetic analyses, Merlot would be the result of crossbreeding Cabernet franc and Magdeleine noire des Charentes.

Synonymy

There is no officially recognized synonym in France nor in the other countries of the European Union, for this variety.

Regulations

In France, Merlot is officially listed in the "Catalogue of vine varieties" on the A list and classified. This variety is also listed in the catalogues of other Member States of the European Union: Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Croatia, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Malta, Portugal, Romania, Slovenia and Spain.

Use

Wine grape variety.

Evolution of area under vines in France

	1958	1968	1979	1988	1998	2008	2018
ha	16975	25124	38391	60007	90059	117354	114578

Description

The identification is based on:
- the tip of the young shoot with a high density of prostate hairs,
- the green young leaves,
- the shoots with green internodes,
- the wedge-shaped dark green adult leaves, with five or seven lobes, an open U-shaped petiole sinus, with sometimes naked petiole veins, medium teeth with straight or convex sides, no anthocyanin coloration of veins, a goffered, very blistered leaf blade, and on the lower side of the leaves, a low to medium density of prostate hairs,
- the round-shaped berries.

Genetic profile

Microsatellite	VVS2	VVMD5	VVMD7	VVMD27	VRZAG62	VRZAG79	VVMD25	VVMD28	VVMD32
Allel 1	137	223	239	186	194	260	238	227	239
Allel 2	149	234	247	188	194	260	248	233	239

Phenology

Bud burst: 2 days after Chasselas.
Grape maturity: mid-season, 2 weeks and a half after Chasselas.

Suitability for cultivation and agronomic production

Merlot is a moderately to strongly vigorous variety that tends to produce a lot of off shoots and suckers. Its semi-erect to horizontal bearing requires sufficient trellising. Its fertility is good and it is better to prune it short. In certain climatic conditions, there is a risk of coulure. Merlot is well suited to clay-limestone terroirs. This variety is rather sensitive to winter and spring frosts (early budburst) and appears to be not very adapted to intense drought conditions.

Sensitivity to diseases and pests

Merlot is particularly sensitive to downy mildew (on flowers and bunches), to leafhoppers and burls. It is also rather sensitive to grey rot. On the other hand, it is not very susceptible to powdery mildew and flavescence dorée and is not very affected by wood diseases.

Technological potential

The bunches are small to medium in size, winged and berries are medium in size. Merlot produces round, powerful, rich in alcohol and colored wines with relatively low acidity. These full-bodied and structured wines, with rather supple tannins, can be aged in wood barrels. The aromas are complex and elegant.

Clonal selection in France

The twelve certified Merlot clones carry the numbers 181, 182, 184, 314, 342, 343, 345, 346, 347, 348, 349 and 519. A conservatory collection of more than 300 clones has been planted in the wine-growing region of Bordeaux since 1966.

Bibliographic references

- Catalogue des variétés et clones de vigne cultivés en France. Collectif, 2007, Ed. IFV, Le Grau-du-Roi, France.
- Documentary collections of the Centre de Ressources Biologiques de la Vigne de Vassal-Montpellier, INRAE - Montpellier SupAgro, Marseillan, France.
- Dictionnaire encyclopédique des cépages et de leurs synonymes. P. Galet, 2015, Ed. Libre&Solidaire, France.
- Traité général de viticulture, Ampélographie. P. Viala and V. Vermorel, 1901-1909, Ed. Masson, Paris, France.

Description of clones approved in France

	Identity and availability		Agronomic data		Technical data	
Clone number	***Origin***	***Selection***	***Fertility***	***Production level***	***Sugar content***	***Potential color***
	Year approved	***Agronomic references***	***Weight of grape bunches***	***Vigor***	***Total acidity***	***Tannic structure***
	Growing surface area		***Size of berries***	***Sensitivity to Botrytis***	***Aromatic intensity***	***Oenological aptitudes***
181	Gironde	INRA	medium to high	medium	medium to high	medium
	1973	Bordelais Languedoc, Provence	low	medium	medium	medium to high
	69.67 ha		low to medium			wines appreciated in wine tastings
ENTAV INRA®	More drooping growth. Clone appreciated for its agronomic characteristics and quality of wines produced.					
182	Gironde	INRA	medium	medium	medium to high	high
	1973	Bordelais Languedoc, Provence	medium		medium	low to medium
	6.93 ha		medium			supple and balanced wines
ENTAV INRA®	Clone appreciated for its agronomic characteristics and quality of wines produced					
184	Gironde	INRA	medium	medium to high	low to medium	

Clone number	Identity and availability		Agronomic data		Technical data	
	Origin	***Selection***	***Fertility***	***Production level***	***Sugar content***	***Potential color***
	Year approved	***Agronomic references***	***Weight of grape bunches***	***Vigor***	***Total acidity***	***Tannic structure***
	Growing surface area		***Size of berries***	***Sensitivity to Botrytis***	***Aromatic intensity***	***Oenological aptitudes***
1973	Bordelais Languedoc, Provence	medium to high		medium	medium	
9.68 ha					distinctive wines of the vine variety	
ENTAV INRA®						
314	Gironde	INRA	medium	medium	medium	
	1973	Bordelais	medium	medium	medium	
	4.54 ha					Balanced wines
ENTAV INRA®						
342	Gironde	INRA	medium	medium	medium	
	1975	Bordelais	medium		medium	
	1.63 ha					distinctive wines of the vine variety
ENTAV INRA®						
343	Gironde	INRA	low to medium	medium	high	medium to high
	1975	Bordelais Languedoc, Provence	medium		medium	medium
	44.11 ha		medium			structured wines
ENTAV INRA®	Clone appreciated for its agronomic characteristics and its capacity for producing wines with good ageing potential					
345	Gironde	INRA				
	1975					
ENTAV INRA®						
	Small distribution clone					
346	Gironde	INRA	medium	medium	medium to high	
	1975	Bordelais Languedoc, Provence	low to medium	high	medium	medium
	23.77 ha		medium			wines appreciated in wine tastings
ENTAV INRA®	Clone appreciated for its agronomic characteristics and quality of wines produced					
347	Gironde	INRA	medium	medium	medium	medium
	1975	Bordelais Languedoc, Provence	medium		medium	medium
	37.66 ha		medium			wines appreciated in wine tastings
ENTAV INRA®	Clone appreciated for its agronomic characteristics and quality of wines produced					
348	Gironde	INRA	medium	medium	medium	medium
	1975	Bordelais Languedoc, Provence	medium to high		medium	medium
	36.41 ha					wines appreciated in wine tastings
ENTAV INRA®	Clone appreciated for its agronomic characteristics and quality of wines produced					
349	Gironde	INRA	high	high	medium	
	1975	Bordelais	high			
	7.94 ha					distinctive wines of the vine variety
ENTAV INRA®	Productive clone					
519	Gironde	ENTAV	high	high	medium	
	1976	Bordelais	medium			
	20.85 ha					distinctive wines of the vine variety
ENTAV INRA®	Productive clone					