

Session 1: The Most Noble White Grape

Aromatic, delicate, racy,
expressive

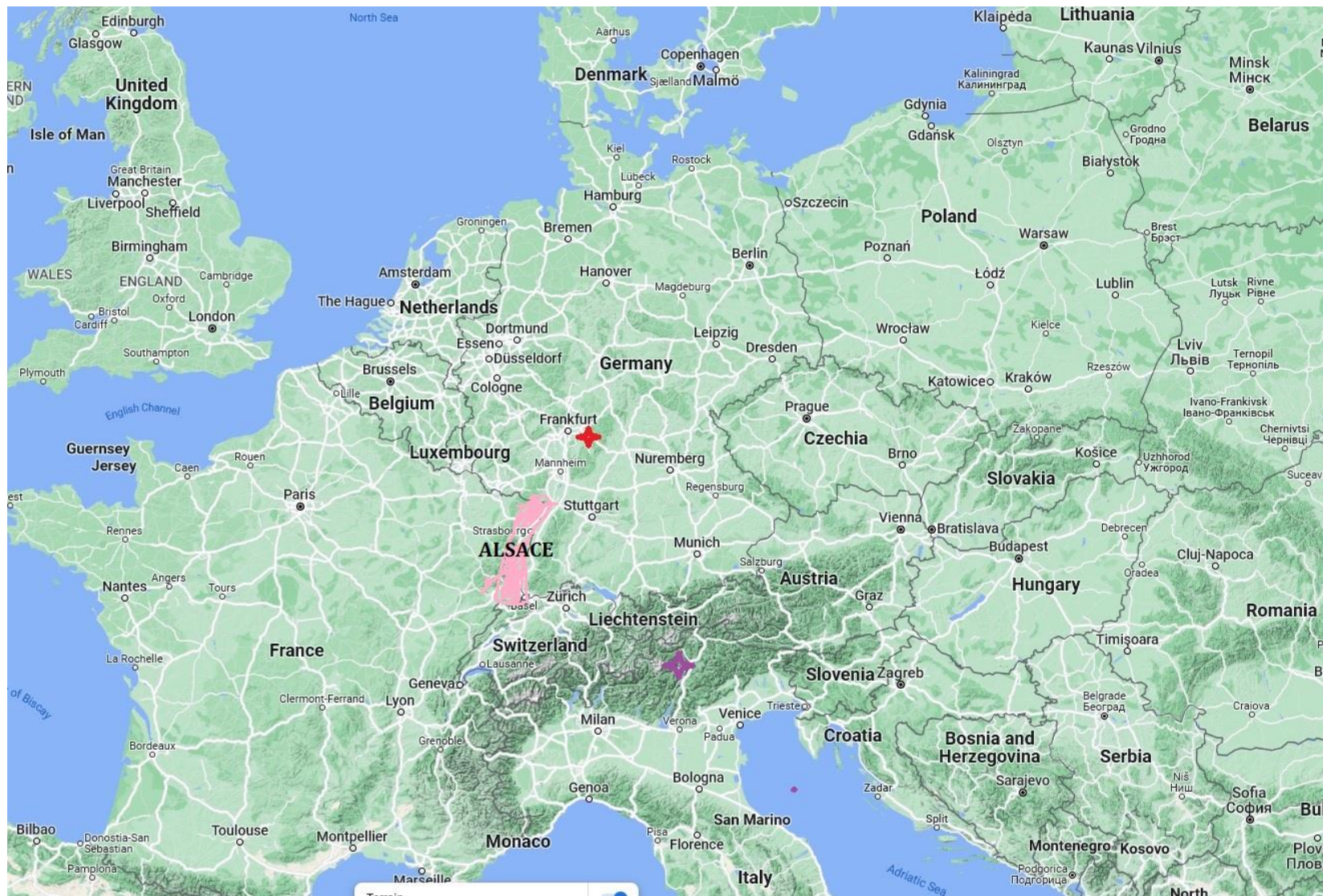
*“Riesling is to white wine what
Cabernet Sauvignon is to red: it
can make entirely different wines
in different places and can age
magnificently.”*

-Hugh Johnson and Jancis Robinson, *The World Atlas of
Wine*



History of Riesling

- DNA evidence shows it is linked to Gouais Blanc, which is also a parent of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir
- First written record in 1435 on an invoice in Germany's Rheingau region. (red marker)
- Planted throughout the Rhine and Mosel by mid-1500s.
- Noted in Alsace in 1477 (pink area)
- Riesling spread to Northeast Italy (purple marker), Austria and the New World



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Expressiveness

“Terroir...is the total natural environment of any viticultural site. No precise English equivalent exists for this quintessentially French term and concept.”

Major components of terroir are:

- Soil
- Topography
- Macroclimate/mesoclimate /microclimate

These factors combine and are reflected in a site's wines consistently from year to year



Silver Thread is perched on a slope on the east side of Seneca Lake very close to the water.

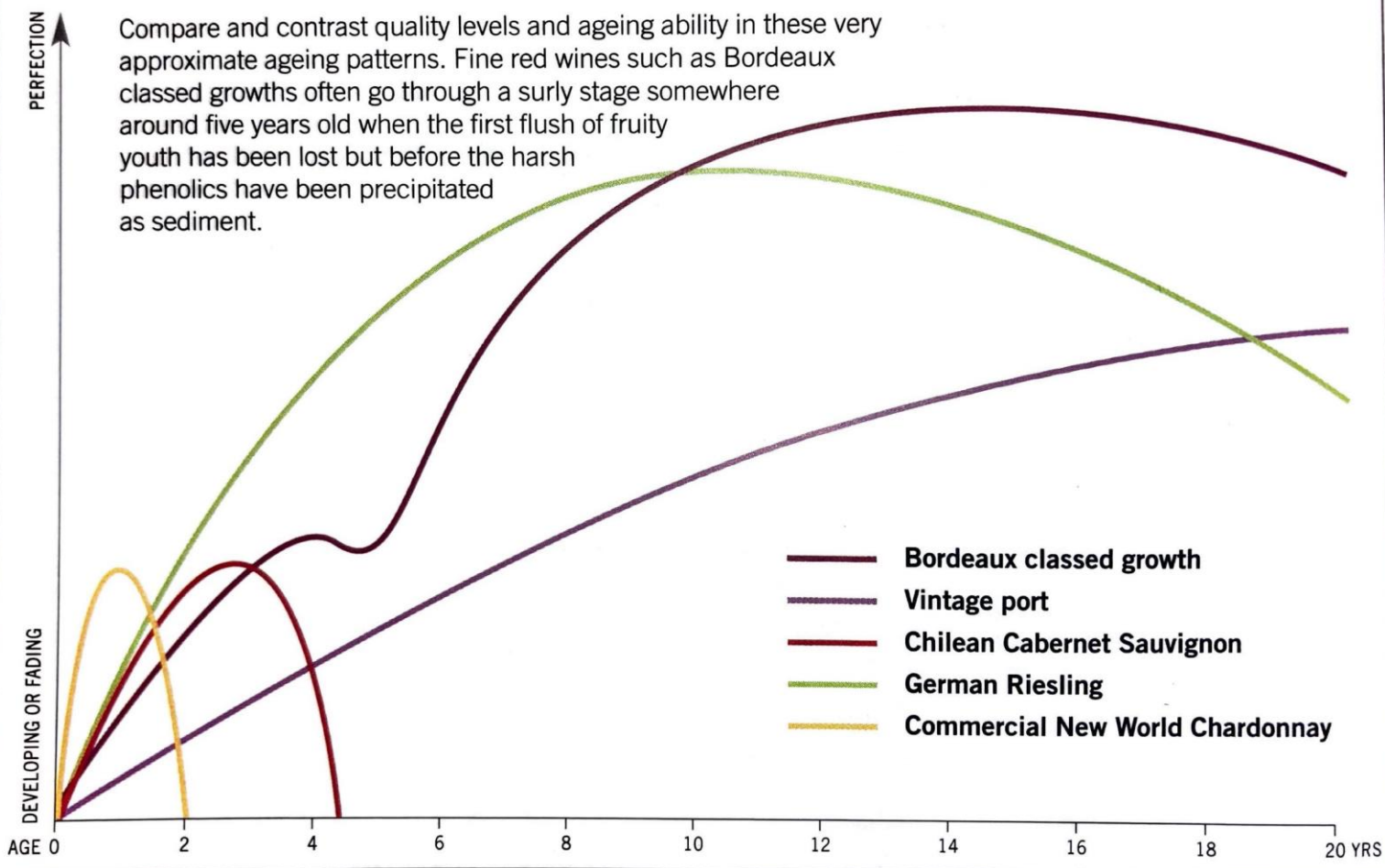


Soil profile of Silver Thread Vineyard block 3 showing very shallow topsoil over shale

Session 1: The Most Noble White Grape

How wine ages

Compare and contrast quality levels and ageing ability in these very approximate ageing patterns. Fine red wines such as Bordeaux classed growths often go through a surly stage somewhere around five years old when the first flush of fruity youth has been lost but before the harsh phenolics have been precipitated as sediment.



Why is Riesling so Ageable?

- **Acid**—higher acid will preserve the wine longer (cool growing seasons = better for aging)
- **Sugar**—higher sugar in the wine preserves fruitiness
- **Flavor/Extract**—intense aromas, flavors and substance



Estate Riesling 2017

Aroma Intensity: ___ low ___ medium ___ high

Aromas/Flavors:

___ citrus ___ tree fruit ___ stone fruit ___ tropical fruit

___ flowers ___ herbs ___ vegetal ___ stony/steely

___ biscuit ___ vanilla ___ yeast ___ cream

___ butter ___ coconut ___ smoke/toast ___ cedar/oak

___ nuts ___ marmalade ___ nutmeg/ginger ___ petrol

___ earth ___ mushroom ___ tea ___ honey

Structure

Flavor Intensity: ___ low ___ medium ___ high

Body: ___ light ___ medium ___ full

Acidity: ___ low ___ medium ___ high

Alcohol: ___ low ___ medium ___ high

Residual Sugar: ___ dry ___ off-dry/semi-dry ___ sweet

Length/Finish

___ short ___ medium ___ long

Estate Riesling 2022

Aroma Intensity: ___ low ___ medium ___ high

Aromas/Flavors:

___ citrus ___ tree fruit ___ stone fruit ___ tropical fruit

___ flowers ___ herbs ___ vegetal ___ stony/steely

___ biscuit ___ vanilla ___ yeast ___ cream

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How old is old for a Riesling?

Age	Description
0-3 years	Youthful
4-8 years	Developing or fully developed
9-14 years	Fully developed if from a great vintage
15+ years	controversial

STV Riesling Vintage Chart

Cool, high acid: keep for 9+ years	2009, 2014, 2017, 2019
Sunny, warm, dry: keep for 4-8 years*	2012, 2016, 2020, 2022
Wet: not sure how they will age	2011, 2013, 2018, 2021
Average vintage: keep for 4-10 years, maybe more	2015

*Sunshine during growing season—more sun exposure = earlier petrol development—these wines seem to age faster (ex: 2012, 2016, 2020)

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Other topics related to aging...

Do wines go through a “dumb phase”?

Is there such thing as bottle shock?

What are the best conditions for aging wine?

How do you know when an aged wine is ready to drink?



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Glossary of Terms: *Oxford Companion to Wine third ed.; Robinson J.; 2006*

Aspect—the direction in which a slope faces, an especially important characteristic of vineyard sites in cool climates

Acidity—the fresh, tart or sour taste produced by the natural organic acids present in a liquid

Extract—the sum of the non-volatile solids of a wine, including sugars, acids, minerals, phenolics, and glycerol. Not necessarily related to body and alcohol. Reds are usually higher in extract than whites, with a notable exception being fine Rieslings from low-yielding sites.

Mesoclimate—site climate, usually on the scale of tens or hundreds of meters, used to describe the conditions of a particular vineyard.

Microclimate—widely misused term meaning strictly the climate within a defined and very restricted space or position. In viticulture, it might be at specified positions between rows of vines, or distances above the ground.

pH—a scale of measurement of the concentration of the effective, active acidity in a solution. Low values indicate high concentrations of acidity and the tart or sour taste that occurs in lemon juice. Values near 7 are effectively neutral. Values between 7 and 14 are found in basic or alkaline solutions such as washing soda. The pH range of most wines is between 2.9 and 4.2. Wines with low pH taste very tart while those with high pHs taste flat or flabby.

Residual Sugar—the total quantity of sugars remaining unfermented in the finished wine, including both glucose and fructose. Riesling is made at all levels of residual sugar.