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Wine Grapes: A Complete Guide To 1,368 Vine Varieties, Including Their Origins And Flavours



Synopsis

Wine enthusiasts everywhere rejoice! Wine Grapes provides absolutely everything the connoisseur wants to know about the succulent, remarkable fruit that care, love, skill, and time transform into humankind's most beloved beverage—and presents it all in a stunningly beautiful, gorgeously illustrated package. The dazzling co-creation of Jancis Robinson, one of the world's best known wine authorities, Julia Harding, who passed the Master of Wine exams at the top of her class, and internationally renowned botanist Josée Vouillamoz, Wine Grapes is the first complete compendium in more than a century to all grape varieties relevant to the wine lover. An exquisite gift book—and a must-own for anyone in the food and wine industry—Wine Grapes charts the relationships of the grapes (with some astounding family trees), discusses in fascinating detail where and how they are grown, and, most importantly, what the wines made from them will ultimately taste like.

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Customer Reviews

For years I've loved Jancis Robinson's pocket-sized Guide to Wine Grapes, turning to it whenever I encounter a new wine grape. Alas, it is long out of print, and a bit dated in terms of the relationships between grapes. Now comes this new volume, which is anything but pocket-sized. Massive and slip-cased, it has the gravitas of an aged Premier Cru. For each of nearly 1400 varieties there is an entry that gives you its color (from among five choices), common synonyms (for some widely grown grapes there are many), other varieties it is often mistaken for, and what is known of its origins and

heritage (relying on recent, extensive, DNA testing of wine grapes). Then there is a brief summary of how it grows (vigor, resistance, when it ripens, and the like) and where it grows. As warranted, there is a discussion of what it tastes like and the quality of the wine it produces. Many of these grapes are actually very marginal from a wine making viewpoint, and are of interest for historical or relationship reasons. (I do miss the little sliding bar from the earlier book that suggested at a glance the likelihood of the grape producing a decent wine.) The relationship information is fascinating. Selected grapes have a family tree associated with their entry. Looking at Cabernet Sauvignon we learn that Chenin Blanc is a sister of Sauvignon Blanc and, hence, an aunt of Cabernet Sauvignon. Freisa turns out to be a cross of Nebbiolo with an unknown grape. The foldout genealogy of Pinot Noir is remarkable. Who would have guessed that Lagrein is a granddaughter of Pinot, while Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah are both great granddaughters?

This review was originally written for 205food.com Kay Gray and Elmer Swenson had a child. Her name is Brianna. She has proven to be a fairly popular girl, particularly in the American Midwest, where the winters hardly faze her. Some have slandered Brianna -- "She comes from a promiscuous family," they say. It is true that her family tree is an amazing sight, with many clans represented, including the labrusca, rupestris, and aestivalis. But let's be charitable. Brianna is a grape, after all. Wine Grapes: A Complete Guide to 1,368 Vine Varieties, Including their Origins and Flavors, is a big book, weighing seven pounds, comprising 1,242 pages. It was a massive undertaking, but its main pleasures are often not its size or its comprehensiveness. No, the joy here is in the littler things: the grape family trees, the DNA profiling, the grapes' geography, the authors' odd asides, and the lists of good producers of each grape. This book has laudably big ambitions, but often stumbles. Like new software, version 1.0 of Wine Grapes is incomplete and not always user-friendly. Promising, yes, but one hopes it will assume a more perfect form in the future. But in the here and now, should you buy this book? There are some reasons you may want to keep your hard-earned money: It is very expensive (\$90 and up). It is awkwardly sized and does not have the format or illustrations that make for a good coffee table book. The color plates in the book are attractive, but not especially useful. Mainly, they seem to be a way to justify the book's price. This volume will not help you identify that unusual vine spotted by the side of the road.

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