

WINES OF VALAIS PURE PASSION.

Switzerland. Naturally.



SWISS WINE | OF COURSE
VALAIS



ENGRAVED ON MY HEART.



Valais – let your imagination soar.

In Valais, the earth is a fertile ground for your imagination. Enter this jewel box of a world where time stands still and you can begin your enchanted escape into a vast visual and sensory feast.

It is impossible not to enjoy the timelessness of a region that radiates such beauty. Savour the sunrise as it sets the glaciers ablaze one by one, then the mountain peaks, forests and terraced vineyards. Admire the breathtaking scenery. Stroll along the renowned Chemin du Vignoble as it emerges at dawn with the first rays of sunshine warming the dry stone walls as they wind their majestic way around nearly 5,000 hectares of outstanding vineyards.

You will never tire of the splendour before you; to travel in haste is to risk missing it. Nature lets the imagination run riot here, as you wander effortlessly from the old stone village nestled by the vineyards, through the fruit tree orchards and on to the paths that zigzag up the mountains.

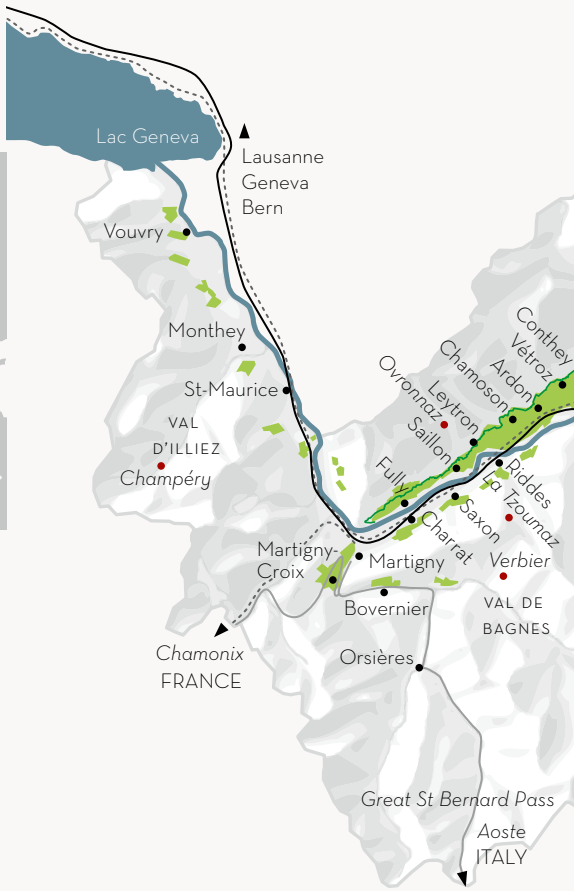
Places like this are true sources of inspiration – even the stuff of dreams. Throw caution to the wind and let chance be your guide. Valais Wines, the hidden jewels of Valais, await your discovery. All over the world, wine lovers are eagerly exchanging the names of Valais wine producers.

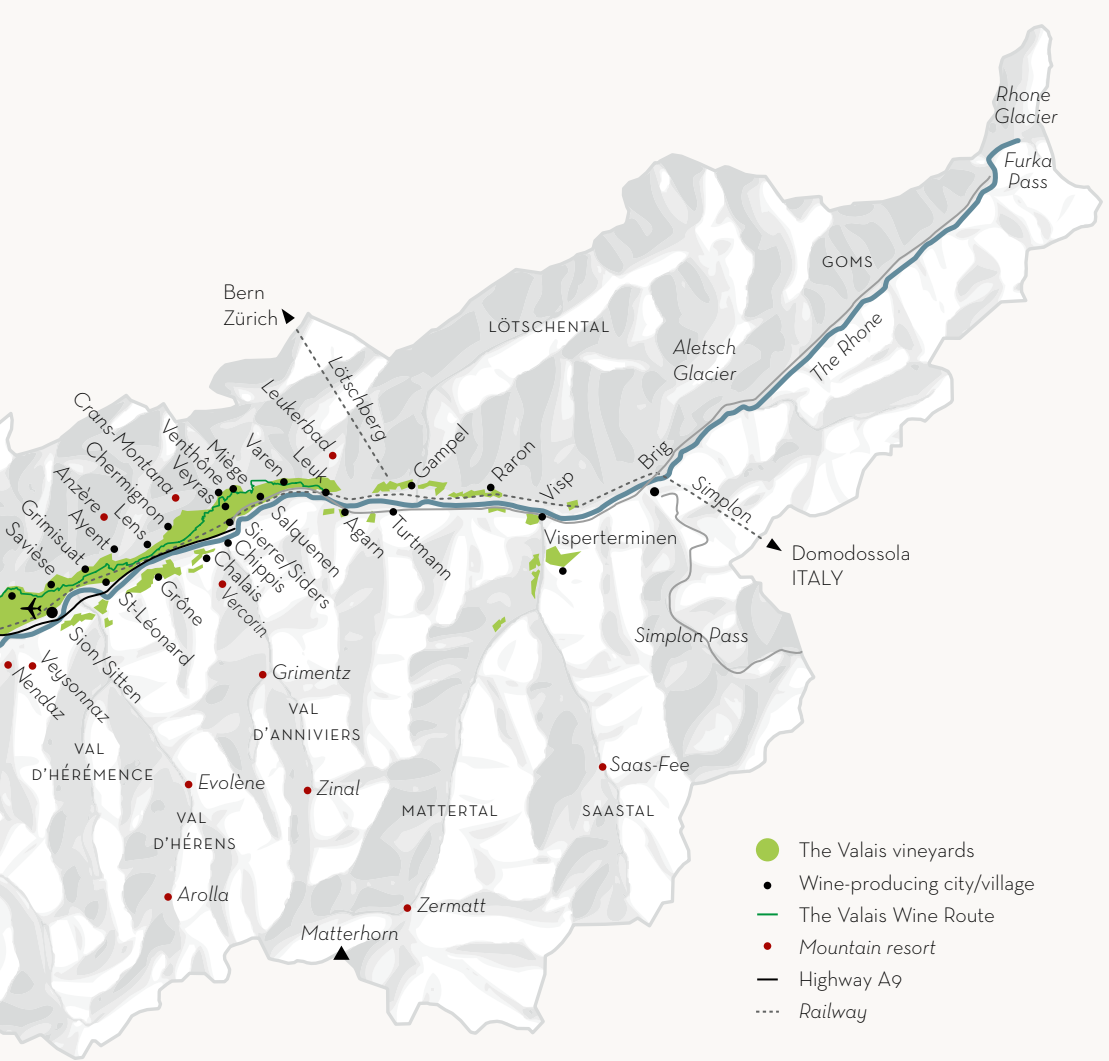
And at the end of the day, watch the setting sun, reflected in the glassy Rhone, the lengthening shadows of the mountains and magnificent vines which spill gently over the hillsides in a magical intimacy of pasture and mountain.

Words cannot do justice to these stirring moments where time stands still, which you will experience when visiting Valais, but it will set your heart aflutter, and let your imagination soar.. Under the Valais night sky, the breeze will tell its stories and the stars will serve as your guide as you discover the WINES OF VALAIS!

<< *Salgesch vineyards in Upper Valais.*

< *St-Léonard vineyard overlooking the castles of Sion.*









Valais and its wonderful diversity.

Valais is one of the most beautiful valleys in the Alps, with magnificent scenery stretching the length of the Rhone as it winds its way towards Lake Geneva. The canton sits at the heart of the Alps and runs, with the river, from east to west, and from 400 to 4,000 metres in altitude. The result is an incredible diversity of landscapes and ecosystems. Hikers who look to either side of the paths are quickly enamoured of the rich flora and fauna of Valais, from the almond trees that often burst into flower just before the end of the winter, to kaki and olive trees, harmless Italian scorpions and praying mantises.

Valais is like a pyramid. On the Rhone plain it is a land of luxuriant gardens and orchards boasting rich alluvial soil. Climb to the level of the vines that hug the steepest slopes, up to 800 metres - or even 1,000 metres in Visperten - and study the plants among the vines and steppe-like brush and bushes that grow there. Above the vines lie forests and fields, and higher still, above the tree line, are the high pastures crowned by the majestic Alpine peaks and their silent, mineral world.

This extraordinary variety runs parallel to the rich and varied traditions of society that have developed here, reflected in the wealth of its culture. Whether it's winter or summer, the number of options for tourists is enormous, from the broad spread of ski resorts in winter to the varied hiking possibilities that lead you from mountain paths to lakeside trails.

valais.ch/en/home

A climate similar to the south of France.

Valais, sitting in the heart of the Alps, benefits from an exceptional steppe climate. The barriers formed by the mountains often hold back the rain, creating warm foehn winds that sweep away the clouds, bringing fine weather and gentle temperatures.

Valais is Switzerland's driest canton, with only 600mm of rainfall a year. With 2,000 hours of sunlight, it is also one of the most sun-blessed regions in central Europe. The foehn winds that are frequent in autumn dry the grapes, help them to ripen and concentrate their sugar, while simultaneously stopping grey rot. When the foehn drops, local winds, usually from the side valleys, often serve the same purpose.

The other key climatic feature is the strong contrast in temperature between warm days and cool nights. The evening chill helps aromas develop complexity and delicacy as the grapes reach the end of the ripening process.

Valais is also remarkable for the regular rhythm and beauty of its autumns, with sunny days and warm, dry weather, perfect for top quality sweet late harvest wines that compete happily with the best sweet wines from anywhere in the world.

Conditions are ideal for these vineyards, which sit at 450 to 800 metres. There are just two shortcomings to what would otherwise be a heavenly location for growing grapes: spring frosts - the glaciers are close by - and dry spells that can last too long in summer. Growers in the past used the famous *bisses* (irrigation channels) that trapped mountain streams and rivers to water the vines. Today's growers irrigate lightly.







Soils that are rich and complex.

Geology is the main factor that contributes to the international reputation of Valais wines. It's as rich as it is complex, linked to the emergence and development of the Swiss Alps. To understand this we need to go back several hundred thousand years, into the depths of time, where we can picture the slow formation of the continents, tectonic plates colliding, and the gradual formation of the Alpine massif. We need to recall how, over time, these geological movements created folds, rock slides, mud slides and sharp fissures in rock formations. Add to this the enormous Rhone Glacier which moved down to Lyon some 15,000 years ago, and then try to envisage its slow retreat, gradually remodelling the land and slopes leaving rich and varied deposits in its wake.

Generally speaking, Lower Valais, the area from Martigny to Saillon, is mainly granitic, sometimes covered by loess (calcium deposits built up by the wind), sometimes interwoven with limestone veins.

Higher up in the canton, the soil is extremely chalky, to a point where people refer to active limestone. This is an area that starts between Sion and Sierre and stretches to Upper Valais, going as high as vines grow.

Between these two areas we find two types of soil: moraines (the debris and rocks carried and left by glaciers) and shallow soils which sit on chalk or schist (a kind of layered, sedimentary rock that resembles slate).

A final type of soil that is important for vines is found on alluvial fans. Formed by alluvial detritus carried over millennia by the Rhone, it is a pebbly, gravelly soil, well drained, and sometimes even very dry. It is found the length of the Valais vineyards, but the most famous of the alluvial fans is La Losentze in Chamoson.

The multitude of grape varieties in Valais grow on this mosaic of different soils. Each variety is matched to the terroir where it can best express itself. Gamay loves granite, Pinot Noir chalky soils. The fact that there are several different geological formations in each region of the canton makes it possible for most varieties to find ideal conditions in Valais.

View of the Matterhorn from Riffelsee lake.

A vineyard in terraces.

Valais has a multitude of soils which are favourable to growing grapes and its climate is particularly good for viticulture.

But without man to work the vines, there would be no wine! The grower and producer are an integral part of the idea of “terroir”. As important as the climate, these people give their knowledge, skills and intuition to the process of creating excellent wines.

Almost 2,000 years ago the first growers began to cultivate vines and to establish vine parcels on the slopes. These terraces, supported by dry stone walls, were artisanal and ecological jewels – architectural masterpieces built onto the rock. Put the terraced vineyards of 62 Valais communes end to end and you have more than 3,000 kilometres of dry stone walls!

What skill and perseverance it must have taken to build these walls, which are more than 20 metres high in some places, and to carry the earth needed to fill the terraced vines! And what hard labour and high maintenance costs, as the mechanisation of labour is practically impossible!

Terraced vineyards in the hills of Sion.









Our wine producers – masters of spellbinding wines!

There is not so much a common ground between nature and our wine producers, as a world which binds them. In this world, wine production takes centre stage; an art form that evolves throughout the seasons.

Wine producers in Valais add passion into their wines – a signature expression and hallmark of skill. Their terroirs are their friends. The stories that they tell us are the stuff of poetry. They are on first-name terms with their vines and know their every nuance intimately, so as to create an element of surprise and capture dreams in the bottle. They visualise their wines as a fashion designer does a collection. Chanel invented allure, Dior elegance and Saint Laurent style. Valais wines embody all three.

They are always seeking ways to inject passion into the mundane. These are the magicians who enhance our lives and strive to encourage well-being and good taste. They are the artists who tantalise the taste buds, and in so doing prove their remarkable skill and exceptional talent.

Environmentally friendly viticulture.

The vineyards of Valais are host to a diverse range of plant and animal species, highlighting their unique and distinctive environment. Valais wine producers have been quick to understand the importance of protecting the natural riches on its hillsides to the best of their ability.

For over 30 years now, wine producers have been working with the Valais government to develop sustainable methods to protect crops. The aim is to limit damage caused to the vines by pests while also protecting people and the environment. As a result of mating disruption techniques and biological pest control, insecticides have almost disappeared from the vineyards of Valais.

The use of herbicides has also been significantly reduced, with cover cropping in vineyards now becoming more widespread thanks to new techniques and a better understanding of the balance between the vines and other flora.

In the same vein, advances in scientific research have also provided effective alternatives to certain problematic treatments at no risk to humans or the environment.

In Valais, wine producers committed to preserving natural resources and protecting the environment apply the principles of integrated production (IP), which promotes the responsible use of pesticides. The vast majority of vineyards now follow this approach.







The mark of sustainability.

Regulated by independent organisations, several labels certify sustainable approaches to wine growing and/or wine production, guaranteeing transparency for consumers.

Vinatura

Certifies quality, eco-friendly Swiss wines produced according to sustainable winemaking principles.

vinatura.ch



IP-SUISSE

The ladybird label recognises Swiss products made using integrated production methods which aim to promote biodiversity and reduce the use of pesticides.

ipsuisse.ch



Organic bud label

To achieve and maintain the balance between nature, humans and animals, organic producers use treatments containing naturally occurring active ingredients.

bio-suisse.ch



Demeter label or biodynamic production

In addition to organic production and promoting vineyard biodiversity, biodynamic farming methods commit to revitalising the land and plants, as well as strengthening animals and people.

demeter.ch



The Valais brand

Certifies organically produced wines made using sustainable methods while respecting people and the local environment.

valais.ch/vinsmarquevalais



The Valais Wine Selection...

After several months of ageing their wines sheltered from the sun's rays, Valais winemakers have the opportunity to present their precious gems before a jury of professionals at the leading competition for AOC Valais wines, the Sélection des Vins du Valais.*

Awarded to the top-scoring wines each year, the gold and silver medals guarantee the highest quality for producers and consumers.

...and its stars.

Petite Arvine, Fendant, Heida, Johannisberg, Cornalin, Humagne Rouge, Syrah, Dôle

These eight icons shine a little brighter amidst the impressive diversity of Valais grape varieties. They deserve to be stars! The Étoile is awarded to the wine with the best score in each category at the Sélection des Vins du Valais. The eight Étoiles du Valais are brought together and sold as a limited edition collection.

**Competition under the patronage of the Swiss Union of Oenologists (USOE) in compliance with the NormeVIN standard, which is based on current international standards stipulating that the percentage of medal-winning wines cannot exceed 30%.*









The AOC VALAIS.

An AOC (Appellation d'Origine Contrôlée) system with regulations similar to those used for vines in the European Union was put in place in Valais in 1990. Wines are subject to very strict rules which cover every aspect of production that affects quality and character: selecting appropriate growing areas and grape varieties, grape yields and minimal sugar levels. These regulations are tightly controlled, meaning that wines can be clearly traced, thus ensuring the long-term future of grape-growing and wine production in Valais.

Valais grape varieties.

With more than 55 official grape varieties across almost 4,750 hectares, Valais is an ampelographic haven of huge diversity, hosting several native and long-established grape varieties which produce unique wines on a global level from a plethora of terroirs.

Valais grape varieties can be classified into three groups: native varieties which probably originated there, traditional varieties established prior to 1900, and the non-native varieties introduced after 1900.

These are set out below in order of decreasing surface area. (2022 area records compiled by the Valais regional government, office for viticulture.)

Grape varieties in Valais – Native varieties – Whites.

Name	Etymology	Ancestry
Petite Arvine or Arvine 252 ha	Latin <i>arvena</i> = recently arrived, introduced, name may be derived from its ancient introduction	Orphan grape variety, grandparent of the extremely rare Grosse Arvine
Amigne 40 ha	Latin <i>amoenus</i> = pleasant, referring to its capacity to produce sweet wines	Orphan grape variety, possible grandson of Petit Meslier from Champagne and great-grandson of Savagnin Blanc and Gouais Blanc from north-east France or south-west Germany
Humagne Blanc or Humagne Blanche 27 ha	Greek <i>hylomaneus</i> = prolific, referring to its strength	Rediscovered under the name Miousat in the Pyrénées-Atlantiques, it may have very ancient origins there, since it is also an offspring of Colombaud from Provence
Rèze or Resi 4,6 ha	From Regis, surname often associated with wine production in Valais	Numerous descendants in the Alps, for example Grosse Arvine in Valais, Cascarolo in Piedmont, Nosiola in Trentino etc.
Lafnetscha 2.1 ha	From <i>Laff-nit-scha</i> , local dialect for “laff es nicht schon” (= do not drink it too early)	Natural crossing of Valais Humagne Blanc and Completer from Grisons

Upper Valais also has tiny quantities of Himbertscha and Plantscher (or Gros Bourgogne) grown by just one producer, and of the grape variety Completer, which used to be cultivated there and has recently been planted in Lower Valais; there Diolle and Grosse Arvine, which were both feared lost and long forgotten, have also recently been revived.

First known reference	Wine characteristics
1602 in Molignon near Sion, under the patois name <i>arvena</i>	Arvine produces internationally recognised wines – both dry and naturally sweet (or <i>flétri</i> as they say in Valais, referring to the use of partially dried grapes), with notes of exotic fruits (mango, grapefruit and rhubarb), a lively acidity and saline finish.
1686 in Regrullion near Sierre, under its modern spelling Amigne	A sticker that is unique to Amigne from Vétroz indicates the wine's sweetness, displaying 1, 2 or 3 bees. The dry wines have aromas of lime tea and are mildly tannic on the palate, while the naturally sweet wines project orange and mandarin zest (Amigne flétrée) with a lovely freshness.
1313 in the Anniviers Register under the name <i>humagny</i>	Dry and subtle, with hints of lemon blossom, Humagne Blanc is an elegant wine that works well with fine food, developing notes of resin and a delicate complexity after a few years in the cellar.
1313 in the Anniviers Register under the name <i>Regy</i>	Dry and high in acidity, relatively subtle on the nose, with aromas of red currant, green apple and a light structure, Rèze wines only show their true potential after a few years in the cellar.
1627 in Niedergesteln near Rarogne, under the name <i>Lachneschen</i>	Lafnetscha wines have complex aromas of pear, elderberry and camomile, with a weighty and lively structure and a floral finish. Contrary to its etymology, these wines can be drunk young, however they also age well.

Grape varieties in Valais – Native varieties – Reds.

Red grape varieties considered to be native cover fairly small areas, such as Goron de Bovernier, probably originating in the Aosta Valley and recently replanted in its initial ancestral introduction village of Bovernier, and Rouge de Fully (or Durize) which only grows in vineyards in Fully and Saillon. As for the Eyholzer Rote variety, its origins are likely to be in northern Italy, as evidenced by a few remaining pergolas in the Visp region.

Grape varieties in Valais – Traditional varieties – Whites.

Name	Etymology	Origins	Ancestry
Fendant 768 ha	The name Fendant refers to a type of Chasselas whose berries split (as opposed to spurt) when squeezed between the fingers.	The Lake Geneva area in the broadest sense, host to the highest morphological variability in Chasselas	Orphan grape variety, father of Mornen Noir in the Rhone Valley, distant cousin of Italian and French grape varieties
Johannisberg, Rhin, Gros Rhin 314 ha	Schloss Johannisberg is a wine-producing estate in Rheingau, Germany, where Riesling is king. However, in Valais, the name Johannisberg refers to Sylvaner, a grape variety likely to have originated in Austria.	East Austria	Natural crossing of Savagnin (Heida in Valais) and Österreichisch Weiß, an old Austrian variety
Heida (Haut-Valais), Païen (Bas-Valais) 212 ha	Heida = very old, ancient, from pagan times, hence the French translation Païen. Known as Savagnin in Jura and Traminer in Germany.	North-east France or south-west Germany	Parent-offspring relationship with Pinot. Numerous descendants, for example Sylvaner (Johannisberg), Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Grüner Veltliner etc.
Malvoisie 59 ha	Malvoisie refers to the well-known Italian Malvasia Bianca, which produces high-quality sweet wines, but in Valais it is the historical name of Pinot Gris (see Pinot Noir).	Variation on the colour of Pinot, appearing several times independently	See Pinot Noir
Ermitage 36,9 ha	From Tain l'Hermitage, the name of a wine-producing area in the Rhone Valley. In Valais, Ermitage is identical to Marsanne, named after a village in the Drôme area.	Rhone Valley	Parent-offspring relationship with Roussanne in the Rhone Valley

Among the traditional grape varieties, Muscat (the name in fact covers two different grape varieties in Valais, Muscat Blanc à Petits Grains and Moscato Giallo) is the most widespread and was already

First known reference	First mention in Valais	Wine characteristics
1612 in Bourgogne, under the name Fendant, Fendans or Lausannois, which clearly gives away its origins	Except for anecdotal appearances in Martigny and Les Evouettes, Chasselas was introduced on a large scale in Valais from the Vaud canton in 1848 under the name Fendant	A true indicator of its terroir, Fendant has a light structure with notes of damp stone and floral aromas, often with a touch of carbon dioxide. Contrary to received wisdom, it can age extremely well and is an excellent partner for fine food.
1665 in Erbrach, Germany under the name Östareiche Rebe (Austrian grape), indicating its origins	1862, probably imported from Germany, from where it gets the name Gros Rhin, at the same time as Riesling, or Petit Rhin	Aromas of hazelnut and moderate acidity are the key characteristics of Johannisberg, which grows particularly well in the Chamoson area.
1483 near Stuttgart, Germany under the name Traminer; 1732 in Besançon, France, under the name Sauvagnin	1586 in Visperterminen under the name Heyda	Heida (from Haut-Valais) or Païen (from Bas-Valais) is a wine of good structure, with notes of citrus and exotic fruits, and it has the capacity to age well.
1711 in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, under the name Ruländer, 1712 in Orléans, France, under the name Auvernat Gris, and 1783 under the name Pinot Gris	Between 1671 and 1698 in a recipe book under the name Malvoisie	Malvoisie from Valais displays hazelnut aromas, a rich structure and a slight bitterness in dry wines, while in sweet (<i>flétri</i>) wines, it displays flavours of quince, candied fruits and apricot, and is creamy on the palate.
1781 in Hermitage, a wine-producing area in the Drôme	Around 1845-1847 in Sion under the name Ermitage	The key notes of Valais Ermitage are of raspberry, and button mushrooms upon maturity, and it produces high-quality dry or sweet wines with good ageing potential.

present in the Middle Ages, as was Gouais Blanc, which only grows today in Haut-Valais. Riesling, introduced at the end of the 19th century, was overtaken by Sylvaner during the following century.

Grape varieties in Valais – Traditional varieties – Reds.

Name	Etymology	Origins	Ancestry
Pinot Noir 1302 ha	From pine - the bunches of grapes resemble pine cones.	North-east France	Parent-offspring relationship with Savagnin. Numerous descendants, for example Chardonnay, Gamay etc.
Gamay 474 ha	From the village of Gamay, near Saint-Aubin on the Côte d'Or	Burgundy	Natural crossing of Pinot (from north-east France) and Gouais Blanc (from north-east France and south-west Germany; Gwäss in Haut-Valais)
Humagne Rouge 142 ha	See Humagne Blanc	Aosta Valley	Natural crossing of Cornalin du Valais (or Rouge du Pays) and an unknown variety. Unrelated to Humagne Blanc.
Cornalin, Cornalin du Valais, Landroter, Rouge du Pays 161 ha	Rouge du Pays and Landroter allude to being commonplace. The name Cornalin may come from <i>cornouiller</i> (dogwood)	Aosta Valley	Natural crossing of Mayolet and Petit Rouge, both from the Aosta valley, where it was most likely born



First known reference	First mention in Valais	Wine characteristics
1375 in Burgundy, under the name Pinot Vermeil	Introduced on a wide scale in Sion, Valais from the canton of Vaud in 1848 under the name Cortaillod	Valais Pinots are lively, with aromas of warm strawberries, sometimes almost cooked if the terroir is particularly sunny, with a lovely freshness due to its pleasing natural acidity. Dôle, the historical and emblematic Valais blend, is composed of 85% Pinot Noir (in majority) and Gamay. In the Rosé version, the same blend is called Dôle Blanche, while Ciel de Perdrix is made of Pinot Noir only.
1395 in Burgundy, under the name Gaamez	1856 in Sion, under the name Dôle, probably introduced from the canton of Vaud	Gamay produces light and fruity wines from limestone terroirs, and rich and complex wines from granite terroirs such as Martigny and Fully, with aromas of cherries and peonies, light in body and crisp. Gamay (in minority) and Pinot Noir produce Dôle, the historical and emblematic blend of Valais (called Dôle Blanche in the Rosé version).
1838 in the Aosta Valley under the name Cornalin	Around 1900, in Fully under the name Humagne Rouge	Humagne Rouge wines give unusual aromas of dried vine leaves, elderberry and violet, and have a smooth structure and unique rustic element.
1878 under the name Rouge du Pays, mentioned as cultivated since ancient times	1878; see left	A grape that is hard to grow and vinify, yet when its yield is well managed, it produces high-quality wines with notes of morello cherry and cloves, deep in colour and with an unmistakable character.



Grape varieties in Valais – Non-native varieties – Whites.

Name	Etymology	Origins	Ancestry
Chardonnay 68.5 ha	From the name of a village in the Mâcon area in Burgundy	Burgundy	Natural crossing of Pinot and Gouais Blanc
Pinot Blanc 23.3 ha	See Pinot	Burgundy	Natural colour variant of Pinot Noir
Sauvignon Blanc 23 ha	From the French word <i>sauvage</i> – wild, the leaves resembling a wild vine	The Loire	Natural crossing of Savagnin and an unknown grape variety
Riesling-Sylvaner 6 ha	Named after the alleged crossing of its breeder Hermann Müller from Thurgovia, which is why the official name today is Müller-Thurgau	Germany	Artificial crossing of Riesling and Madeleine Royale, not Sylvaner as previously thought
Viognier 11.5 ha	Unknown	The Rhone Valley	Parent or natural child of Mondeuse Blanche, which is the mother of Syrah

In Valais, there are also other grape varieties which have been introduced more or less recently; for example, in decreasing order of vineyard area: Gewürztraminer, an aromatic variation of Savagnin Rose; Roussanne, a parent of Marsanne in the Rhone Valley; Chenin Blanc from the Loire, which is a brother of Sauvignon Blanc; Aligoté from Burgundy; Sémillon from Bordeaux; Doral and Charmont, which are two artificial crossings between Chasselas and Chardonnay; and finally Altesse from Savoie.

First known reference	First mention in Valais	Wine characteristics
1685-90 in Saône-et-Loire under the name Chardonnat	Around 1918 at Domaine de l'Etat in Leytron	This grape variety is used in several methods of wine making; in tanks it produces aromas of citrus and pineapple with an elegant body, while in oak barrels it produces notes of lemon and butter with a more full-bodied structure.
1868 in Burgundy	Around 1960	A light and dry wine, with strength and balance, a lovely acidity, perfect with fine foods
1534 in the Loire Valley under the name Fiers	At the end of the 20th century	Aromas of box tree and pink grapefruit, an intense and fruity wine, with notes of exotic fruits
Crossing carried out in 1882	In 1921 at Domaine de l'Etat in Leytron	Notes of green apple, sometimes similar to Riesling with notes of honey and petrol, a dry and lively wine.
1781 in the Condrieu region in the northern Rhone Valley	In 1980 at Domaine de l'Etat in Leytron	Characterised by the aroma of apricot and rose, dry and full-bodied



Grape varieties in Valais – Non-native varieties – Reds.

Name	Etymology	Origins	Ancestry
Syrah 172.6 ha	Latin <i>serus</i> = late ripening	Isère in France	Natural crossing of Dureza (from the Ardèche) and Mondeuse Blanche (from the Savoie)
Merlot 145 ha	From the French <i>merle</i> (blackbird), as this bird is commonly seen among the vines of this early ripening variety.	Gironde in France	Natural crossing of Cabernet Franc (Basque country) and Magdeleine Noire des Charentes (Charentes)
Gamaret 103 ha	Invented name based on that of its parents	Switzerland	Artificial crossing of Gamay and Reichensteiner (German crossing) carried out in 1970 by Agroscope
Diolinoir 107.7 ha	Contraction of the words Diolly and Pinot Noir, from the parental names	Switzerland	Artificial crossing of Pinot Noir and Robin Noir (called Rouge de Diolly in Valais) carried out in 1970 by Agroscope
Ancellotta 23 ha	Derived from the Lancellotti family from Modena, Italy	Emilia-Romagna in Italy	Unknown



First known reference	First mention in Valais	Wine characteristics
1781 in the Hermitage wine region under the name Sira	Around 1921 at Domaine de l'Etat in Leytron	Notes of spice and light tobacco, silky on the palate with a great intensity, Syrah can produce wines of the highest quality in Valais.
1783-4 in Libourne in the Gironde	In 1926 at Domaine de l'Etat in Leytron, obtained from Ticino	Aromas of blueberries and blackcurrants, supple on the palate with elegant and soft tannins, a weighty and enjoyable wine.
Named and put into production in 1990	At the end of the 20th century	Rich in colour and tannins, fruity and spicy, Gamaret is an ideal blending partner for barrel-aged wines.
Named and put into production in 1989	At the end of the 20th century	Black fruits on the nose, deep in colour and robust, used for blended wines, however it is successfully used alone more and more frequently.
Unknown	At the end of the 20th century	Neutral taste, rich in colour, sugar and acidity, generally used in blended wines as an improving variety.

Among the other key non-native grape varieties are: Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc from Bordeaux; Garanoir, a brother of Gamaret; Carminoir, which is an artificial crossing of Pinot Noir and Cabernet Sauvignon carried out in 1982 by Agroscope; and Galotta, which is also the product of an artificial crossing of Ancellotta and Gamay carried out in 1981 by Agroscope.

Dôle.

Dôle, the emblematic Valais blend, is historically derived from the fusion of the two most widely planted red grapes in Valais: Pinot Noir and Gamay. This traditional wine, whose name has been part of Valais wine heritage since 1854, has constantly adapted to the various grape varieties and changing preferences. The ever-present Valais Dôle is capable of a multitude of expressions, reflecting the terroirs and producers. In 2021, Dôle was given a new lease of life with a diversified blend, affording oenologists greater freedom. Valais intends to put Dôle firmly back in the spotlight, so why not make it Switzerland's favourite red wine?

Inspired by elegant Dôle, winemakers have gradually developed other white and red blends. These original wines have a clear signature and are designed by producers whose creativity is centred around the complementary aspects of different grape varieties. Robust, powerful, ambitious and original, these wines are often matured in oak.

Rosé wines.

Canton Valais, with its warm and sunny climate, lends itself naturally to rosé wines. The best time to enjoy these is the middle of summer, on a shady terrace, with one of the two specialties, Œil de Perdrix and Dôle Blanche, served well chilled. Œil de Perdrix is pure Pinot Noir and has a colour range that runs from slightly golden to a deep, rich salmon.

This is a true wine, in the sense that it is not a byproduct made from a red wine but a completely separate wine. Its colour depends on the length of time the grape skins remain in contact with the must before fermentation sets in. Classy, velvety, it is often characterized by a fresh liveliness on the palate. It is an excellent aperitif wine, or it can be served with light summer meals. Dôle blanche is made from the same grapes as Dôle, but it is vinified as a white wine, in other words without leaving the grape skins to macerate. It is very light in colour and fruity in the mouth. This is a generous, vinous wine which often has a soft finish. It links the charm and freshness of a white wine and the comfort of a red. This is also ideal as an aperitif, with tapas, Asian dishes or spiced and even peppery foods.



Sweet Wines.

Few grape-growing areas in the world are suitable for making great sweet wines, called *liquoreux* in French to denote sweetness but also top quality. Valais is part of this small and privileged group: its late harvest wines are the equal of those of France – Sauterne, Coteaux du Layon, Riesling Auslese – and Tokaji Aszú from Hungary. Sweet wines are without any doubt one of the great strengths of the Valais vineyards!

Valais provides the perfect setting for grapes to wither naturally on the vine in autumn. The climate is exceptional, with dry and sunny late autumns, warm during the day and cool at night, dew at sunrise, and a mix of winds including the famous dry foehn. Such late harvests are often accompanied by the development of noble rot (the famous *Botrytis cinerea*), which magically creates indescribably fine aromas. The best vineyards are found on the steepest slopes, which tend to have excellent ventilation and exaggerate climatic conditions, for sweet wines that are among the best in the world.

The Grain Noble ConfidenCiel Charter was created in 1996. Some 30 producers have banded together to encourage this tradition of great wines made from vine-dried grapes. These producers sign a charter agreeing to respect rules whose key points are:

- to use traditional Valais grape varieties planted in the best areas and from vines that are at least 15 years old: Petite Arvine, Ermitage, Johannisberg, Amigne, Paien and Malvoisie.
- to leave the grapes to develop a high level of natural sugar in the must (minimum 130 degrees Oechsle, without adding sugar)
- to let the wines mature a minimum of 12 months in wood, either casks or barrels
- to award the Grain Noble ConfidenCiel label only after an internal tasting session by the group, which retains only wines judged sufficiently worthy.





Grand Cru AOC VALAIS, the hallmark of a first-rate terroir.

The term “Grand Cru” has become synonymous with rare and exceptional produce. The term is intrinsically linked to the sought-after influence of prestigious vineyards. So it comes as no surprise that Valais wine producers are keen to highlight the extraordinary potential of their vineyards through the wines that represent their terroirs the most - the Grand Crus.

The designation “Grand Cru” is awarded only to AOC premium wines produced in narrowly defined areas, using native and traditional grape varieties most suited to the type of soil and the climate of specific plots. Only wines produced in accordance with strict regulations (more stringent than those relating to traditional AOC) can qualify for classification as a Grand Cru.

It is a conscious choice to produce a Grand Cru and only the most committed wine producers agree to meet the demanding requirements of the Grand Cru regulations. These impose stringent quality controls at all stages of production as well as tasting acceptance procedures.

As a result, the designation “Grand Cru” can be considered a guarantee of quality.



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