

Industry Update: The New EU Wine Regulations

In keeping with the Society of Wine Educators' mission to foster and promote professional education and development, not only of the individual, but also of the wine and spirits industry in general, the Society is now periodically releasing updates that impact the industry. The Society is providing this information in several places: press releases; SWE's quarterly newsletter; on its website, and through its Facebook page (www.facebook.com/societyofwineeducators).

Since 2009, a wide-reaching series of changes has been instituted by the European Union, which has brought all member countries' food products, including wine, in line with the three-tiered structure of quality. These regulations, and their resultant changes, are now being enforced.

One such change is the institution of some new category terms. However, the regulations do permit the use of pre-existing Designations of Origin to continue to be used, provided that EU countries register them with the European Council by December 31st, 2011. Accordingly, there will not be much change on wine labels.

Within the newly adopted EU structure, three levels of wines are defined. The highest level of wines is ***Protected Designation of Origin*** (PDO), which many people would recognize by its old name: QWPSR (Quality Wine Produced in a Specified Region). Below PDO is ***Protected Geographical Indication*** (PGI) wine, which includes all of the wines that were previously table wines with a geographic indication. Finally, there is ***Wine***. This term is intended for use by table wines that do not carry a geographical indication.

Protected Designation of Origin

The wines that fall under this level must be produced entirely from grapes grown in a clearly defined territory after which they are named and within the stated area. The specific wines are registered by the individual countries, which will specify the parameters such as the delimited boundaries, maximum yields, permitted grape varieties, allowed oenological practices, and a description of the main analytical and organoleptic characteristics of wine.

Such wines can also be labeled with the traditional terms of individual Member States as AOC (France) or DOCG/DOC (Italy).

Protected Geographical Indication

PGI wines are those whose qualities can be attributed to being produced from a registered geographical region or specific place. To qualify as a PGI wine, at least 85% of the

grapes must come from the defined geographical area after which it is named and the wine must be produced in this geographical area. Similarly to PDO wines, these wines must adhere to rules and regulations governing viticultural and oenological practices. However, these rules and regulations are generally less restrictive than those for PDO wines.

These wines will carry the PGI expression, or the traditional terms of individual Member States, such as Vin de Pays (France) or IGT (Italy).

In addition, these wines may now carry the name of a grape variety and/or a vintage date if the wine is produced from a minimum of 85% of the named variety or vintage. If two or more grape varieties are listed, the wine must be produced entirely of those varieties, shown in descending order of proportions. If 100% of the grapes were harvested exclusively from a named vineyard, it may also be included on the label.

Table Wines/Wines

Provided that they meet these same minimum requirements, a new category of ***Table Wines*** has been created. ***Wines*** (a.k.a. table wines without any geographical indication) may now list grape variety and vintage on their labels as well, placing this new category between ordinary Table Wines and PGI wines.

Other labeling changes include a more defined usage of terms for sparkling wines such as:

- Quality Sparkling Wine - for those wines whose CO₂ is produced wholly by a secondary fermentation in the bottle, subject to disgorgement and with a minimum of 9 months aging on the lees.
- Aerated Sparkling Wine – for wines whose “sparkle” is derived from the addition of CO₂.

Another change is the required indication of potential allergens from eggs, milk and cereals.

Accordingly, the wines themselves will continue to be produced as they always have been, but these changes will affect what appears on the labels.

This type of update reinforces the Society’s role in getting out pertinent information, which affects all tiers of the wine and spirits industry, to wine educators both in the US and abroad. To receive a copy of the FederDOC powerpoint document (financed by the European Union and Italy) which shows in greater detail how these new rules affect grape growing, winemaking and marketing, contact info@societyofwineeducators.org or call 202-408-8777.