



Quality wines from the heart of Europe



European Wine Law is Instrumental to Success of Barolo, Chianti, and Sicily

Protected Origins and Evolved Appellation Regulations Promote Consistent Style and Quality for European Wines

New York, December 23, 2021 – “*Taste the Difference: Quality Wines from the Heart of Europe*” program makes you discover some renowned Italian wine regions that have long stood as bastions of quality winemaking with deep rooted traditions and demarcations: Barolo, Chianti, and Sicily. Contemporary appellation regulations, determined collectively by each region and enforced under national and European law, serve to further guarantee and promote wines of quality and style to protect each region’s brand in the global market.

The concept of the Protected Denomination of Origin (PDO) was established by the European Union to codify quality expectations and to protect labeling names by origin for food, agricultural products, and wine. Within the European PDO system, each member state demarcates producing regions within its borders, often aligning with historic areas and traditional characteristics and styles. According to the European Commission, EU quality policy “aims to protect the names of specific products to promote their unique characteristics, linked to their geographical origin as well as traditional know-how.”

Italy has two primary quality schemes for wine, including the Denominazione di Origine Controllata e Garantita (DOCG), the highest designation for Italian wines, and the Denominazione di Origine Controllata (DOC), which has less strict guidelines for production. The DOCG and DOC systems each have multiple criteria such as permitted grape varieties, harvest yields, alcohol levels, and barrel aging regimens. The DOCG system requires wines to be submitted for analysis and tasting by a government committee before they can be distributed to ensure adherence to set regulations. The DOCG system also strives to prevent counterfeiting by placing unique government seals across the neck of the bottle.

Origin is key to success in the wine market, as wine drinkers and critics celebrate wines with a deep “sense of place.” An experienced consumer or wine expert is able to distinguish the wines of Barolo as Barolo, the wines of Chianti as Chianti, and the wines of Sicily as Sicily because of their protected origin and set of expected attributes.

Barolo DOCG, from the village bearing the same name in the Langhe region of Piemonte in northern Italy, has a longstanding tradition of quality that earned it the title of ‘King of wines and wine of kings’ in the late 19th century. The DOCG ensures that all Barolo wines are produced to this standard. Some of the key production rules of Barolo DOCG include:

- All wines must be 100 percent produced from the Nebbiolo grape variety
- Geographic labels may only be from one of 11 communes in Barolo
- All vineyards must be at elevation between 170 m (560 ft) and 540 m (770 ft)
- A minimum alcohol level of 13 percent by volume

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- Rosso wines must be aged for a minimum of 38 months, including 18 months in barrel, and Riserva wines must be aged for a minimum of 62 months, including 18 months in barrel

Chianti DOCG, from Tuscany in central Italy, is built on thousands of years of wine production, with the name 'Chianti' becoming universally recognized for quality in the 17th century. The first 'formula,' or prescribed blend for Chianti wines was written by Baron Bettino Ricasoli in 1872. Today, key production rules of Chianti DOCG include:

- All wines must be at least 70 percent produced from the Sangiovese grape variety
- Geographic labels must be from one of seven subzones of Chianti DOCG
- A minimum alcohol level of 11 percent by volume (each subzone may have a specific requirement above 11 percent)
- Rosso wines must be aged for four months or longer, depending on the subzone, Superiore wines must be aged at least 10 months, and Riserva wines must be aged for at least two years, with barrel regimens governed by each subzone

Sicilia DOC, from the island of Sicily in southern Italy, has a winemaking tradition that dates back millennia. The Roman Republic and Imperial Rome developed vast appreciation for Sicilian wine; Julius Caesar and Pliny the Elder were famously fond of wines from the region. Contemporary production rules under the DOC include:

- Single variety wines and blended wines, each with a specific guideline for varietal labeling
- Bianco and Rosato/Rosé Spumante wines may undergo second fermentation either in bottles or in autoclaves; varietal spumanti must use the Charmat method (second fermentation in autoclaves)
- Minimum alcohol requirements depending on the grape variety or type of wine
- Denoted residual sugar levels for sparkling wines, varying by type
- No minimum aging specifications

These classifications serve to protect and preserve the names and their associated quality levels and characteristics of the Barolo, Chianti, and Sicilia regions. Due to specific, lawful guidelines, fine wines from each of these regions remain revered in the global wine market. Consumers may now recognize DOCG or DOC labeling as indications of quality and characteristics that will persevere for posterity.

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About TASTE THE DIFFERENCE PROGRAM

The program: *European quality wines: taste the difference* is a project financed by the European Union and managed by Unione Italiana Vini and PRODECA for the promotion of PDO and PGI European wines abroad in China and US. In order to achieve this objective, the TTD.EU program will organize wine seminars, workshops and b2b meetings both in these countries and in Spain and Italy, inviting wine professionals to join study trips to Europe. The program, realized in the span of three years (2021-2023) aims at creating awareness about European quality wines, in particular Italian and Spanish, which share a long tradition and a high standard of quality.

The beneficiaries: Unione Italiana Vini is the oldest and most commissioned Association of the Italian wine market. It represents cooperative, private and agricultural wine-companies, bottlers, consortia, associations and wine-making machines or wine cellars / laboratory manufacturers, located throughout the Italian territory. Promotora de Exportaciones Catalanas (PRODECA) is a public company established in 1986 and part of the “Ministry of Climate Action, Food and Rural Agenda of the Government of Catalonia”. It supports the agri-food sector and its companies with the knowledge, tools and experience to increase their products in Catalunya and worldwide.

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