HARMONY BETWEEN GERMAN WINES AND ASIAN CUISINES
Harmony between German Wines and Asian Cuisines

Contents

PREFACE 4-5
GRAPE VARIETIES 6-7
RECIPES 8-39
WINE GROWING REGIONS 40-44
MAP OF GERMAN WINE REGIONS 45
Asian cuisines are best matched with wines with moderate alcohol levels, soft tannins, crisp acidity and the right amount of residual sugar, all essential characteristics to balance the acidity, sweetness, umami and mix of spices in Asian dishes. Happily, this means that almost every kind of German wine can pair well with Asian cuisines. This perfect pairing is made possible thanks in part to the elegance and freshness of these cool-climate wines.

Characterised by a huge array of ingredients and diverse flavour profiles, Chinese and Japanese cuisines are best paired based on the cooking techniques and sauces used, as this gives a more practical and flexible guide to pairings that will tantalise the palate. This approach works because the richness and flavour profile of each dish are really determined by the cooking techniques and sauces used, rather than simply by the ingredients. With this in mind, we have outlined below five basic culinary styles in Japanese and Chinese cuisines and outlined their ideal German wine partners.

**STEAMED AND BRAISED DISHES**
Braising, stewing, and steaming let original flavours of the ingredients shine through, creating light, yet persistent umami flavours when seasoned with clear broth and rice wine. For example, Chinese steamed grouper, Japanese dashi and sake-steamed clams are best paired with light German wines, such as refreshing Weissburgunder, Grauburgunder or Riesling Sekt. Here the acidity of the wines complements the natural flavours in the dish whereas the light body and medium intensity of fruit preserves the delicate balance of flavour in each dish.

**SOY SAUCE DISHES**
Soy sauce plays a key role in both Chinese and Japanese cuisines. Whether it is Chinese red braised pork belly or Japanese grilled eel, soy sauce works with sugar and fat to create a rich, sweetly caramelised flavour. A fruity red with soft tannins, such as Pinot Noir or Dornfelder, makes an ideal match.

**SWEET AND SOUR DISHES**
Japanese salad with pomelo vinaigrette and Perilla plum sauce pork chops, as well as Chinese sweet and sour ribs, Gu Lou pork, and sweet and sour Mandarin fish are all classic dishes that exemplify these two countries’ love for the interplay between sweet and sour. Depending on the sweetness and richness of the dish, a sweet Riesling, such as a Riesling Kabinett or Riesling Spätlese, works well to both complement the sweetness and balance the richness of the meat with a refreshing, crisp acidity.

**HOT AND SPICY DISHES**
Although traditional Japanese cuisine does not include hot and spicy dishes, Chinese and other Asian cultures have an entire culinary lineage dedicated to chili heat. Those who are passionate about spicy food may find that a Riesling Trocken or Riesling Sekt works particularly well to clear the palate and prime the taste buds, whereas the less dedicated may prefer a sweet Riesling whose sugar soothes the heat!

In most cases, however, one bottle alone may not be enough for an Asian feast with multiple dishes filling the table. We recommend at least two German wines for such meals: a refreshing Riesling Kabinett or Riesling Sekt that pairs well with a wide range of dishes and a Pinot Noir or Dornfelder to provide fruitiness and soft tannins. This combination is a safe decision however diverse the dishes on offer.

Our book curates 16 everyday recipes from Japan and China, showing the step-by-step preparation for each, as well as suggesting a German wine match for each. We hope that it will encourage you to further explore the perfect harmony between German wines and Asian cuisines!
GERMAN GRAPE VARIETIES

RIESLING
Germany’s – and perhaps the world’s – premier white grape variety. The first documented mention of Riesling dates from the 15th century. Today, Germany is home to more than half of the worldwide area devoted to Riesling.

No other white wine can better express its origin, or terroir. Distinctive for its elegance, firm acidity, complexity, longevity and extraordinary versatility with food. Crisp apple, ripe peach, mineral rich, or the honeyed tone of botrytis are variations on a theme: Riesling.

SILVANER
An ancient variety that yields full-bodied, juicy wines with a fine fruity acidity. Silvaner is neutral enough to enhance the delicate flavours of seafood and light meats or white asparagus.

MÜLLER-THURGAU
A very modern and food-friendly white wine because of its lower amount of alcohol. Also called Rivaner, the wines are flowery, with a light Muscat tone. In addition, Müller-Thurgau wines are not too acidic and therefore easy on the palate – and on the stomach. To be enjoyed while young and fresh.

GRAUBURGUNDER (PINOT GRIS)
This variety is quite popular in Germany and is well-known for its powerful, mouth-filling style with rounded acidity. Grauburgunder needs good vineyards with deep, heavy soils. Harvest time is usually late September and early October. It is grown primarily in Baden and the Pfalz.

WEISSBURGUNDER (PINOT BLANC)
Elegant white wines with refreshing acidity, a fine fruitiness and bouquet reminiscent of pineapples, nuts, apricots or citrus.

SCHEUREBE
Ripeness is essential to bring forth its characteristic bouquet reminiscent of pomelo or grapefruit, and its subtle, spicy undertones. A dry Scheurebe white wine is a delicious sipping wine for an evening get together, while those with some sweetness are remarkable for their ability to enhance and refine the exotic spices and aromas found in many Asian cuisines.

GEWÜRZTRAMINER
These rich, full-bodied wines show a very pronounced bouquet, reminiscent of roses or lychee with medium to fine acidity and spicy flavours. It is produced as both in a dry style and as a richer, sweeter wine.

SPÄTBURGUNDER (PINOT NOIR)
Germany’s finest and foremost red variety yields mouth-filling, velvety smooth red wines with a slightly sweet, fruity aroma. In Germany, the area under Pinot Noir cultivation has grown steadily in recent years to encompass almost 12,000 hectares.

That makes Germany the third largest producer of Pinot Noir in the world.

DORNFELDER
This full-bodied, complex wine wins over its fans with a deep red colour and a smooth tannin structure. Typical Dornfelder aromas are reminiscent of morello cherries, blackberries and fresh red dates.

LEMBERGER (BLAUFRÄNKISCH)
These red wines are rich in fruit, acid and tannin, with a bouquet ranging from berry-like to vegetal, such as green peppers.

TROLLINGER
Trollinger is a red grape that ripens very late and it yields fragrant, fruity, light, palatable wines with a pronounced acidity. It is planted almost exclusively in Württemberg nowadays.
SOY-BRAISED PORK 豚の角煮 / 炖五花肉

INGREDIENTS
- Pork belly 1 kg
- German white wine 120 ml
- Soy sauce 80 ml
- Honey 80 ml
- Water
- Leek (green part) 4 cm
- Ginger (thin slices) 3
- Boiled eggs 4
- 1 bunch of green vegetables such as Chinese cabbage

PREPARATION
1. Cut the pork belly into large pieces to fit your pan.
   Put the frying pan on high heat. When it gets hot, add pork belly, browning all sides, and then put in a saucepan. Add enough water to completely cover the meat.
   Add ginger and leek and put on high heat.
2. When it starts to boil, turn the heat down low and boil for around 1.5 hours until the meat is soft (test with a fork). If it is drying out, add more water and let the dish boil slowly.
3. Let the soup cool down, then remove the meat and cut into blocks of about 4-5 cm square.
   [If you cool it down well at this stage, the meat will not become dry.]
4. Put meat and all the other seasoning except soy sauce, into a new pan (which fits the meat neatly) and heat. When it boils, turn the heat to low and cook for around 5 mins, then add soy sauce.
5. Place a plate, which fits snugly into the pan, directly on the meat (a drop lid is also acceptable). Boil for about 30 minutes.
6. Remove pork from the pan, put the boiled eggs and green vegetable to season them, and boil the broth to half the volume.
   Put the meat back in and mix well with the broth.
   Put meat on a plate, add boiled egg or boiled green vegetables and pour over broth.

WINE RECOMMENDATION
Full bodied Lemberger
Dornfelder
Späthburgunder
INGREDIENTS

TO MAKE 50 DUMPLINGS
Flour 500g
240ml warm water
Minced pork 400g
Celery 100g
Salt 1 tsp
Sugar 1/2 tsp
Light soy sauce 3 tbsp
Oyster sauce 1 tbsp
Oil 2 tbsp
100ml water

1. Pour flour into a large bowl, add 240ml warm water and stir until well-combined.
2. Wash and dry hands. Dip in some dry flour and knead the dough until it becomes smooth.
3. Place the dough in a bowl, cover with plastic wrap and set aside for 1 hour.

MAKE DUMPLING STUFFING
4. Mix minced pork, salt, sugar, light soy sauce, oyster sauce, oil and 100ml water, stir well and refrigerate for 2 hours.
5. Chop the celery and pat dry with kitchen towel.
6. Take the pork out of the fridge, add chopped celery and stir well.

MAKE DUMPLINGS
7. Divide the dough into 8g pieces.
8. Rub the dough with a rolling pin and press into a circle about 7cm in diameter.
9. Take 15g stuffing and put it in the center of the dumpling wrapper.
10. Fold the wrappers, use fingers to press the edges together.

BOIL DUMPLINGS
11. Fill in a clean pot with water, and bring to the boil. Pour in an appropriate amount of dumplings according to the size of the pot, and boil them until they rise to the surface.
12. Take out the dumplings and serve.

WINE RECOMMENDATION

Weissburgunder
Silvaner
Spätburgunder
SWEET AND SOUR SPARE RIBS
骨付きスペアリブの甘酢煮丨糖醋排骨

INGREDIENTS
Pork ribs cut in pieces 1kg
Vinegar 6 tbsp
Sugar 4 tbsp
Light soy sauce 4 tbsp
Rice wine 2 tbsp
Sesame seeds 1 tbsp

PREPARATION
1. Soak ribs in warm water for 10 minutes to drain the blood.
2. Drain ribs with kitchen towel.
3. Heat a pan, add ribs, and stir for 10 minutes until the ribs turns brown.
4. Add vinegar, sugar, light soy sauce, rice wine, pour water until the ribs are covered.
5. Cover the pot and simmer over low heat for 30 minutes.
6. Remove the lid, turn to high heat and cook the ribs for another 5 minutes.
7. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and enjoy!

WINE RECOMMENDATION
Riesling Spätlesse
Dornfelder
Spätburgunder
SPRING ROLL

PREPARE THE SPRING ROLL FILLING
1. Shred pork, add salt, rice wine and egg white, stir well.
2. Shred and drain mushroom and carrot.
3. Heat a pan with oil over a high heat, add pork strips, stir until they brown, add mushroom and carrot, stir until soft.
4. Add 500ml water and simmer for 20 minutes.
5. Add corn flour stir quickly until completely incorporated with no lumps, and continue to simmer for 5 minutes.
6. Cool the filling and refrigerate for 1 hour.

MAKE & FRY SPRING ROLLS
7. Spread about 50g of filling evenly in the center of each wrapper.
8. Fold the spring rolls over on all sides, making sure no filling is exposed.
9. Heat a pan with oil over a high heat, put in the spring rolls and fry until golden.
10. Place spring rolls on kitchen towels to drain off excess oil.

INGREDIENTS
- Spring roll wrapper 30
- Pork 500g
- Mushroom 5
- Carrot 1/4
- Oil 4 tbsp
- Corn flour 2 tbsp
- Salt 1 tsp
- Chinese rice wine 1 tbsp
- Raw egg 1

WINE RECOMMENDATION
Dry Riesling
**SUKIYAKI** すき焼き | 寿喜鍋

**INGREDIENTS**
- Beef sliced meat 400g
- Seri or Shungiku or Watercress 200g
- Fried tofu (can be substituted with Momen tofu) 1 block
- Tomatoes 2-3
- Leek 2
- Sukiyaki stock
- Dashi soup 300 ml
- Soy sauce 3-4 tbsp
- German white wine 4 tbsp
- Sugar 3 tbsp

**PREPARATION**
1. Drop the roots of Seri (Shungiku or watercress) and cut them to 4 to 5 cm of length. Cut fried tofu into bite-sized pieces. Cut tomatoes into wedges.
2. Cut leek diagonally.
3. Put the ingredients of the Sukiyaki stock and half of the leek in a pan and boil. When boiled, add the beef, and cook through, then enjoy leek and meat first.
4. Skim off the scum from the pan and add tofu. When the broth is boiled, turn down the heat and boil for 2 minutes until the tofu is fully heated, then add the rest of the ingredients and warm through.

*Adding tomato to the ordinary ingredients gives a little lightness and freshness (light sourness) which improves the compatibility with wine.*

**WINE RECOMMENDATION**
- Spätburgunder
- Full bodied Lemberger or Dornfelder
STIR-FRIED GREEN PEPPERS AND BEEF
チンジャオロース | 青椒牛肉丝

INGREDIENTS
Green pepper 2
Red pepper 1/2
Beef 300g
Garlic 3 cloves
Ginger 3 slices
Raw egg 1
Oil 2 tbsp
1 tbsp of each: oyster sauce, Chinese rice wine, light soy sauce, corn flour
1 tsp of each: dark soy sauce, vinegar, sugar

PREPARATION
1. Shred beef into strips, add oyster sauce, rice wine, light soy sauce, dark soy sauce, raw egg white and corn starch, mix well and refrigerate for 30 minutes.
2. Chop garlic, shred green and red peppers.
3. Heat a pan with oil over a high heat, add beef strips, stir until the beef turns brown and take it out.
4. Add garlic, ginger and peppers in the pan, stir quickly, and add the beef strips.
5. Add vinegar and sugar, and cook for 2 minutes.

WINE RECOMMENDATION
Silvaner
Riesling Kabinett
Spätburgunder
TERIYAKI CHICKEN 鶏の照り焼き | 照烧鸡肉

INGREDIENTS
Chicken thighs 2 (600g)

TERIYAKI SAUCE
Soy sauce 1.5 tbsp
German white wine 2 tbsp
Honey 1.5 tbsp
Cooking oil 1 tsp

vegetable as a side dish
a handful of mitsuba

PREPARATION
1. Remove excess fat from chicken thighs. For thick parts, make an incision with a kitchen knife and lightly spread to adjust the thickness. Mix the honey, soy sauce and water together for the sauce.

2. Add cooking oil to a frying pan and add the chicken thighs with the skin side down. Heat on medium heat. Fry for about 3 minutes, until excess fat begins to melt. When the meat is cooked, turn it over and fry for another 2 or 3 minutes.

3. Remove the excess fat from the pan with a paper towel, then add the Teriyaki mixture and grill with a glaze of sauce.

4. Remove the chicken from the pan, leave it for 4 or 5 minutes to allow the sauce to reduce, then cut the chicken into bite sized pieces.

Serve with your favourite vegetables and cover with the remaining sauce.

WINE RECOMMENDATION
Spätburgunder
Dornfelder
Off-dry Riesling
Riesling Kabinett
KUNG PAO CHICKEN

PREPARATION

1. Cut chicken breast into small pieces, add rice wine, light soy sauce, salt, corn starch and marinate for 30 minutes.
2. Heat a pan with oil over a high heat, add chicken and stir until the chicken turns brown and then remove chicken.
3. Cut cucumber and carrot into small pieces.
4. Heat the same pan with oil over high heat, add chili and soybean paste, and stir for 10 seconds.
5. Add cucumber and carrot, and stir until cooked.
6. Add chicken, the vinegar, sugar, honey, oyster sauce and 30ml water, and continue frying until the juice is drained.
7. Add peanuts, stir for a few seconds then quickly turn off the heat.

INGREDIENTS

Chicken breast 500g
Cucumber 1/2
Carrot 1/4
Soybean paste 2.5 tbsp
Dried chilies 3
2/3 tbsp each of:
  rice wine, light soy sauce, oil
  vinegar, honey, oyster sauce
  salt, sugar, corn flour
  1 tbsp water
  Peanut 30g

WINE RECOMMENDATION

Riesling Kabinett
Dry Sekt
**MARINATED FISH 魚の南蛮漬け | 南蛮漬魚**

**INGREDIENTS**
- Raw salmon or white fish 500g
- Plain flour
- onion, carrot, celery, etc. total 150 g
- Cooking oil 2 tbsp

**FOR THE MARINADE**
- Vinegar (can be white wine vinegar or citrus juice) 2 tbsp
- Soy sauce 2 tbsp
- Water 2 tbsp
- Sugar 1 tbsp
- Sesame oil 1 tsp
- Condiments, favorite herbs, etc.

**PREPARATION**
1. Cut the fish into bite-sized pieces. Cut carrots into julienne strips. Cut the onion and celery into thin slices and soak the onion in water for about 10 minutes, then dry off with a paper towel. Put the marinade ingredients into a bowl and mix together.
2. Put the oil in a frying pan on a medium heat. Coat the fish with flour and then fry until crisp, turn and fry the other side. Then remove the fish onto a paper towel to drain the oil. While it is still hot, add the fish to the marinade bowl with the vegetables and stir it gently. Leave in the marinade for around 3 hours, to infuse flavours.
3. Put fish and vegetables on a plate and sprinkle with liquid marinade. You can also add condiments and herbs.

**WINE RECOMMENDATION**
- Weissburgunder
- Off-dry Riesling
- Off-dry Rosé
SUSHI ROLL 手巻き寿司 | 寿司巻

PREPARATION

SUSHI RICE
Mix ingredients of sushi vinegar and stir well until sugar and salt dissolve. Stir freshly cooked rice through sushi vinegar. Put rice on a pan, spreading it out to cool quickly.

1. Put sushi rice in a bowl. Cut the dried seaweed into two equal parts. Dip the Boston lettuce in water to refresh it and then dry. Arrange the ingredients on a plate.

2. At a table, put sushi rice on the dried seaweed, roll each with your favorite ingredients. Salmon roe, dry-cured ham, tuna, white radish sprouts and herbs are used in the photo.

INGREDIENTS

SUSHI RICE 2 CUPS (1 cup = 180ml)
Freshly cooked rice: 2 cup

SUSHI VINEGAR
Vinegar 3 tbsp
Sugar 1.5 tbsp
Salt 1/3 tsp

Dried seaweed 10 pieces
Boston lettuce
Salmon roe 3 tbsp
Tuna 4 slices (50g)
Salmon 4 slices (50g)
Shrimps 4 (60g)
Dry-cured ham 4 slices
Roast beef 4-8 slices
Cucumber 1/2 (cut into 4 strips)
White radish sprouts, basil, herbs
Wasabi and soy sauce

WINE RECOMMENDATION

Sekt
Silvaner
Weissburgunder
**TEMPURA**

**INGREDIENTS**
- Large prawns 4 (100g)
- Aubergine 2
- Shishito pepper (or green pepper) 4 pieces
- Lotus root 4 slices (50g)
- Sweet potato 4 slices
- Egg yolk 1
- Flour 1 cup
- Cold water 1 cup
- Deep-frying oil

**DIPPING SAUCE**
- Soy sauce 2 tbsp
- Dashi soup 150 ml
- Sugar 1 pinch

**PREPARATION**

1. Peel the shell off the prawn, trimming but not removing the tail, and de-vein. Cut vegetables into thick pieces and sizes that are easy to fry.
2. Put the egg yolk and water and mix until even. Put in flour and mix it with a fork, leaving some lumps of flour (do not over-mix).
3. Put flour over the prawns lightly. Heat the deep-frying oil to around 180°C. Dip prawns and vegetables into the batter mixture then add carefully to oil in batches. Deep-fry for 2-3 minutes until they become crisp.

**DIPPING SAUCE**
Mix all ingredients for dipping sauce in a pan and bring to the boil for 1-2 minutes. Set aside.
SASHIMI いかとマグロのの刺身 | 生魚片

**INGREDIENTS**

- Tuna Sashimi 200g
- Squid Sashimi 200g-250g
- Green shiso 8 leaves
- Condiment (garnish, white radish sprouts, etc.)
- Soy sauce, wasabi

**FOR THE SAUCE**

- Soy sauce 1.5 tbsp
- Red wine 1 tbsp
- Olive oil 1 tsp

**PREPARATION**

1. Mix the sauce in a sandwich bag (ziplock). Put the tuna in it, remove any air, seal and leave it in the refrigerator for 12 hours or overnight.
2. Make a thin cut of about 2 mm on one surface of squid.
   Turn it over and place green shiso on the front. Roll up from the front and cut into pieces for easy eating.
3. Dry the tuna with a paper towel and cut into bite-sized pieces.

Serve tuna and squid with condiments, soy and wasabi.

**WINE RECOMMENDATION**

- Weissburgunder
- Silvaner
- Spätburgunder
STEAMED SCALLOPS WITH VERMICELLI
ホタテの春雨のせニンニク風味丨蒜蓉粉丝蒸扇贝

INGREDIENTS

- Scallops 4
- Mung bean vermicelli 1 bundle
- Garlic 12 cloves
- Oil 2 tbsp
- Chinese rice wine 1.5 tbsp
- Light soy sauce 1 tbsp
- Fresh chilli 1
- Spring onion 2

PREPARATION

1. Clean the scallops, take out the scallop meat and marinate in the rice wine. Wash the shells.
2. Mash the garlic, mince the spring onions and the fresh chilli.
3. Heat a pan with oil over high heat, add garlic and fresh chilli, stir for 1-2 minutes, then put it into a bowl, add light soy sauce and mix well to make the garlic paste.
4. Place the vermicelli in a bowl and soak in warm water for 5 minutes until soft.
5. Take the scallop shells, arrange the vermicelli across these, and place a scallop on each.
6. Pour the garlic sauce evenly over the scallops.
7. Steam the scallops for 6 minutes.
8. Sprinkle with chopped spring onions.

WINE RECOMMENDATION

Dry Riesling
Grauburgunder
DEEP-FRIED TOFU 摂げ出し豆腐 | 炸豆腐

**INGREDIENTS**
- Momen tofu (firm tofu) 2 blocks
- Potato starch powder
- Oil for deep-frying

**SOUP**
- Dashi soup stock 1 cup
- Soy sauce 1 tbsp
- Mirin 1 tbsp
- Grated radish (lightly squeezed) 1/2 cup
- Grated ginger 1/2 tbsp
- Condiments and green onion

**PREPARATION**

1. Drain the tofu, cut in half and wrap each half with a paper towel. Place on a chopping board, and weigh down with a large pan and plates. (It is best to do this in a sink because water will seep out of the tofu).
2. Put the soup stock ingredients in a pan and warm them.
3. Warm the deep-frying oil to a medium temperature. Sprinkle the dried tofu with potato starch and gently add it to the deep-frying oil. Leave it for a while, until the surface becomes crisp, repeat for the other side.
4. Once crisp all over, remove tofu from the oil and place on a plate. Add grated radish and other condiments and serve with the warm soup.

*You can also add fried vegetables such as fried Shishito pepper.

**WINE RECOMMENDATION**
- Riesling Kabinett Rosé
- Lighter style red like Trollinger Winzersekt
NOODLE WITH SOY BEAN PASTE

INGREDIENTS

- Noodles 600g
- Minced pork 500g
- Cucumber 1
- Carrot 1
- Ginger 2 slices
- Sweet bean paste 200g
- Soybean paste 50g
- Oil 2 tbsp
- Salt 1/2 tsp
- Light soy sauce 1 tbsp
- Chinese rice wine 1 tbsp
- 100ml warm water

PREPARATION

1. Heat oil in a pan over a high heat, add ginger slices and minced pork, stir until the minced meat turns brown.
2. Add sweet bean paste, soybean sauce and rice wine, continue to stir for a while, then add 100ml warm water.
3. Add light soy sauce and salt, simmer for 8 minutes, then stir until the sauce becomes thick. Turn off the heat and set aside.
4. Fill a clean pot with water, heat until the water boils, pour in the noodles and stir constantly for 2 minutes and then remove noodles.
5. Shred cucumber and carrot.
6. Put the noodles into a bowl, add the meat sauce, shredded cucumber and carrot, stir all the ingredients.

WINE RECOMMENDATION

Weissburgunder
Silvaner
MAPO TOFU 麻婆豆腐

INGREDIENTS
- Tofu 400g
- Minced pork 100g
- Spring onion 1
- Chili soybean paste 2 tbsp
- Light soy sauce 2 tbsp
- Corn starch 1 tbsp
- Oil 2 tsp
- White pepper 1/2 tsp
- Salt 1/2 tsp
- Water 100 ml

PREPARATION
1. Put minced pork in a small bowl, add white pepper and salt, and marinate for 10 minutes.
2. Cut tofu into cubes of about 2cm. Chop spring onion.
3. Heat a pan with oil over a high heat, add minced pork and stir. When the minced pork turns brown, add chili soybean paste.
4. Add soy sauce and 100ml water.
5. When the sauce boils, add tofu and water until the tofu is covered. Simmer for 5 minutes.
6. Add corn starch, stir quickly.
7. Sprinkle with chopped spring onions.

WINE RECOMMENDATION
Riesling Spätlese
Lemberger
The vineyards of Germany’s “red wine paradise” line the valley of the Ahr River, which joins the Rhine south of Bonn. From the heights of a basalt cone to the east or the slate cliffs to the west of the elegant spa Bad Neuenahr-Ahrweiler, there are magnificent views of the steep vineyards. Riesling is the premier white grape, but the tiny region is especially known for its fine red wines, particularly Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and its early-ripening cousin, the rare Frühburgunder. Portugieser is the other important red wine grape.

 Franken, the hilly region east of Frankfurt, follows the zigzag of the Main River. Distinctive wines and the Baroque Residence in Würzburg make it a popular destination for art and wine lovers alike. Not only the Bocksbeutel – a flat, round-bellied bottle – but also climate and drier-style wines set Franken apart. Cool climate and soil types make Riesling the exception and earlier-ripening white grapes, e.g. Rivaner or Bacchus, the rule. Above all, the region is known for powerful, earthy Silvaner wines. Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) and Domina, seldom seen elsewhere, are the main red grapes.

 The Mittelrhein is the spectacular stretch of the Rhine River between Bonn and Bingen known as the Rhine Gorge. Here the river has carved its course through the slate stone hills to form a steep, narrow valley with a microclimate in which wines have thrived for 2,000 years. Ancient castle ruins tower over vinecovered cliffs and medieval villages. Steeped in legend (the Loreley rock, the Nibelung dwarfs), the Mittelrhein has long been a source of inspiration to artists and winemakers. Crisp, fragrant Riesling wines are the hallmark of the region.
For 85 km (53 miles), the Deutsche Weinstrasse (German Wine Road) winds its way through the picturesque villages and lush vineyards between the borders of Rheinhessen and France. Vines thrive in the warm, sunny climate of the Palz, yielding voluptuous, full-bodied wines. Riesling, the leading variety, and the white Pinots Weissburgunder and Grauburgunder are among the finest white wines, while Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir), Dornfelder and the rare St. Laurent are foremost for top quality reds. Müller-Thurgau and Portugieser are favourites for easy drinking.

The heart of the Rheingau borders the Rhine on its east-west course from Wiesbaden to Rüdesheim, where noble Riesling and Spätburgunder (Pinot Noir) vines cover the slopes of the Taunus Hills. The region’s success is due to an optimal climate, perfect southerly exposure and an ongoing commitment to the high quality standards set centuries ago by the Benedictines at Johannisberg, the Cistercians at Kloster Eberbach and the local aristocracy. The fortuitous “Spätlese” (late harvest) at Johannisberg 775 set the stage for the rich, ripe Botrytis wines for which Germany is renowned.

The valleys of the Mosel River and its tributaries, the Saar and the Ruwer, have been the setting for some of Germany’s most romantic wine country since Roman times. Vines and forests carpet the steep slate slopes framing the river as it loops its way toward the Rhine at Koblenz. It is a Riesling region par excellence. Those are wines of incomparable finesse, rich in fragrance and fruity acidity and often a mineral undertone. A speciality from the vineyards opposite the country of Luxembourg, southeast of Trier, is Elbling, prized as a racy, light still or sparkling white wine.

The “Land of a Thousand Hills” lies within the large elbow formed by the Rhine as it flows from Worms to its bend at Mainz, then westward to Bingen. A region of this size, Germany’s largest, offers a great diversity of wines. Innovative varietal wines, such as RS (Rheinhessen Silvaner) or Selection Rheinhessen, and the increasing importance of white and red Pinots highlight the region’s quality potential. The classic whites Müller-Thurgau, Silvaner and Riesling predominate, but aromatic varieties are grown too, as are the red grapes Portugieser and Dornfelder.
ITALIAN FLAIR ON THE ELBE

ITALIAN FLAIR ON THE ELBE
HOME OF RED WINE SPECIALITIES
SACHSEN

Germany’s easternmost wine region lies in the Elbe River Valley. Dresden, nicknamed the “Florence of the Elbe” because of its cultural ambience and mild climate, and Meissen are the main towns. Vines are planted mostly on steep, terraced slopes of granite. Although the palette of Saxon wines is diverse, Rivaner, Riesling and Weissburgunder (Pinot Blanc) are foremost, and sold as dry varietals. A small quantity of Goldriesling, a rare Riesling-Muscat crossing, is produced - a specialty found nowhere else in Germany.

WÜRTTEMBERG

Württemberg is a rural, hilly region adjacent to Baden and south of Franken. Metropolitan Stuttgart and Heilbronn are wine centres, but most of the vineyards are scattered amid fields and forests throughout the Neckar River Valley. Red wine predominates and ranges from crisp, light Trollinger – the “Swabian national drink” – to wines with more colour, body and substance, e.g. Schwarzriesling (Pinot Meunier) and Lemberger (Blaufränkisch). Riesling is by far the most important white variety, followed by Kerner, a crossing which has affinities with Riesling.