WINES OF VALAIS
PURE PASSION.

SWISS WINE
VALAIS

Switzerland. Naturally.

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 Rhône, 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 afutter, 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!
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 200 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 Vispental – 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.

www.visitvalais.ch
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 2100 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 gray 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 is 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 depth 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 the 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.
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 2000 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 65 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 mechanization of labour is practically impossible!
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 which 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 them 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 and the Valais government have born in mind past failures to sustainably protect plant life, and have strived to put in place new methods to protect crops. These processes limit the damage caused by pests while allowing natural predators to reinhabit the vineyards. Today, across almost 5,000 hectares, the use of synthetic insecticides is virtually unnecessary in the vineyards of Valais.

In the same vein, treatments against diseases such as mildew or powdery mildew are no longer carried out as a matter of course. The decision to intervene is measured and carried out in response to the real threat of such diseases.

In Valais, the wine producers committed to preserving natural resources are for the most part members of VITIVAL. Working alongside the Valais regional government, this large organisation of almost 1,000 members maintains a positive dynamic, leading the whole profession towards sustainable viticulture.
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 50 official grape varieties across almost 5,000 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. (2014 area records compiled by the Valais regional government, office for viticulture.)
### Grape varieties in Valais – Native varieties – Whites.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Petite Arvine</strong> or <strong>Arvine</strong> 177 ha</td>
<td>Latin arvena = recently arrived, introduced, name may be derived from its ancient introduction</td>
<td>Orphan grape variety, grandparent of the extremely rare Grosse Arvine</td>
<td>1602 in Molignon near Sion, under the patois name arvena</td>
<td>Arvine produces internationally recognised wines - both dry and naturally sweet (or flétri 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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Amigne</strong> 41 ha</td>
<td>Latin amoenus = pleasant, referring to its capacity to produce sweet wines</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>1686 in Regrullion near Sierre, under its modern spelling Amigne</td>
<td>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 flétrie”) with a lovely freshness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humagne Blanc</strong> or <strong>Humagne Blanche</strong> 29 ha</td>
<td>Greek hylomaneus = prolific, referring to its strength</td>
<td>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</td>
<td>1313 in the Anniviers Register under the name humagny</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Rèze</strong> or <strong>Resi</strong> 2.5 ha</td>
<td>From Regis, surname often associated with wine production in Valais</td>
<td>Numerous descendants in the Alps, for example Grosse Arvine in Valais, Cascarolo in Piedmont, Nosiola in Trentino etc.</td>
<td>1313 in the Anniviers Register under the name Regy</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lafnetscha</strong> 1.5 ha</td>
<td>From Laff-nit-scha, local dialect for laff es nicht schon (= do not drink it too early)</td>
<td>Natural crossing of Valais Humagne Blanc and Completer from Grisons</td>
<td>1627 in Niedergesteln near Rarogne, under the name Lachneschen</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Upper Valais also has very small quantities of Himbertscha and Plantscher (or Gros Bourgogne) – only grown by one producer, Completer which has been grown there for a long time and has recently been planted in Bas-Valais, where Dialle (thought to have disappeared) and Grosse Arvine (long forgotten) have recently been revived.

### Grape varieties in Valais – Native varieties – Reds.

Red grape varieties which are considered to be native cover fairly small areas, for example Goron de Bavernier, probably originating in the Aosta Valley and recently replanted in its initial ancestral introduction village of Bavernier, and Rouge de Fully (or Durize) which only grows in vineyards in Fully and Salillon. 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.
## Name | Etymology | Origins | Ancestry | First known reference | First mention in Valais | Wine characteristics
--- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | ---
**Fendant** 944 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 Rhône Valley, distant cousin of Italian and French grape varieties | 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.**

**Johannisberg, Rhin, Gros Rhin** 246 ha | Schloss Johannisberg is a wine producing domain in Rheingau, Germany. In Valais, Johannisberg is identical to Sylvaner, from the Latin word *silva*, or forest, a reference to its supposed wild origin. | East Austria | Natural crossing of Savagnin (Heida in Valais) and Österreichisch Weiß, an old Austrian variety | 1665 in Erbrach, Germany under the name Ostareiche 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.**

**Heida** (Haut-Valais), **Paien** (Bas-Valais) 121 ha | Heida = very old, ancient, from pagan times, hence the French translation Pain. In Valais, Heida is identical to Savagnin, whose name may stem from the French word sauvage, meaning wild, referring to its supposed wild origin. | 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. | 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 Paien (from Bas-Valais) is a wine of good structure, with notes of citrus and exotic fruits, and it has the capacity to age well.**

**Malvoisie** 74 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 | 1711 in Baden-Württemberg, Germany, under the name Rulander, 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 naturally sweet wines (“flétri”), it displays flavours of quince, candied fruits and apricot, and is creamy on the palate.**

**Ermitage** 47 ha | From Tain-l’Hermitage, the name of a wine producing area in the Rhône Valley. In Valais, Ermitage is identical to Marsanne, named after a village in the Drôme area. | Rhône Valley | Parent-offspring relationship with Roussanne in the Rhône Valley | 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.**

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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 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.

<table>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Pinot Noir</strong></td>
<td>From pine - the bunches of grapes resemble pine cones.</td>
<td>North-east France</td>
<td>Parent-offspring relationship with Savagnin. Numerous descendants, for example Chardonnay, Gamay etc.</td>
<td>1375 in Burgundy, under the name Pinot Vermeil</td>
<td>Introduced on a wide scale in Sion, Valais from the canton of Vaud in 1848 under the name Cortaillod</td>
<td>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 Œil-de-Perdrix is made of Pinot Noir only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gamay</strong></td>
<td>From the village of Gamay, near Saint-Aubin on the Côte d’Or</td>
<td>Burgundy</td>
<td>Natural crossing of Pinot (from north-east France) and Gouais Blanc (from north-east France and south-west Germany, Gwäss in Haut-Valais)</td>
<td>1395 in Burgundy, under the name Gaamez</td>
<td>1856 in Sion, under the name Dôle, probably introduced from the canton of Vaud</td>
<td>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).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Humagne Rouge</strong></td>
<td>See Humagne Blanc</td>
<td>Aosta Valley</td>
<td>Natural crossing of Cornalin du Valais (or Rouge du Pays) and an unknown variety. Unrelated to Humagne Blanc.</td>
<td>1838 in the Aosta Valley under the name Cornalin</td>
<td>Around 1900, in Fully under the name Humagne Rouge</td>
<td>Humagne Rouge wines give unusual aromas of dried vine leaves, elderberry and violet, and have a smooth structure and unique rustic element.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cornalin, Cornalin du Valais, Landroter, Rouge du Pays</strong></td>
<td>Rouge du Pays and Landroter allude to being commonplace. The name Cornalin may come from cornouiller (dogwood)</td>
<td>Aosta Valley</td>
<td>Natural crossing of Mayolet and Petit Rouge, both from the Aosta valley, where it was most likely born</td>
<td>1878 under the name Rouge du Pays, mentioned as cultivated since ancient times</td>
<td>See left</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

There are no other traditional red grape varieties in Valais.
### Grape varieties in Valais - Non-native varieties - Whites.

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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>Chardonnay</td>
<td>68 ha</td>
<td>From the name of a village in the Mâcon area in Burgundy</td>
<td>Natural crossing of Pinot Noir and Gouais Blanc</td>
<td>1685–90 in Saône-et-Loire under the name Chardonnet</td>
<td>Around 1918 at Domaine de l’Etat in Leytron</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pinot Blanc</td>
<td>24 ha</td>
<td>See Pinot</td>
<td>Natural colour variant of Pinot Noir</td>
<td>1868 in Burgundy</td>
<td>Around 1960</td>
<td>A light and dry wine, with strength and balance, a lovely acidity, perfect with fine foods</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sauvignon Blanc</td>
<td>21 ha</td>
<td>From the French word sauvage - wild, the leaves resembling a wild vine</td>
<td>Natural crossing of Savagnin and an unknown grape variety</td>
<td>1534 in the Loire Valley under the name Fiers</td>
<td>At the end of the 20th century</td>
<td>Aromas of box tree and pink grapefruit, an intense and fruity wine, with notes of exotic fruits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Riesling-Sylvaner</td>
<td>10 ha</td>
<td>Named after the alleged crossing of its breeder Hermann Müller from Thurgovia, which is why the official name today is Müller-Thurgau</td>
<td>Artificial crossing of Riesling and Madeleine Royale, not Sylvaner as previously thought</td>
<td>Crossing carried out in 1882</td>
<td>In 1921 at Domaine de l’Etat in Leytron</td>
<td>Notes of green apple, sometimes similar to Riesling with notes of honey and petrol, a dry and lively wine.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Viognier</td>
<td>7.5 ha</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>Parent or natural child of Mondeuse Blanche, which is the mother of Syrah</td>
<td>1781 in the Condrieu region in the northern Rhône Valley</td>
<td>In 1980 at Domaine de l’Etat in Leytron</td>
<td>Characterised by the aroma of apricot and rose, dry and full-bodied</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 Rhône 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.
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<tr>
<td><strong>Syrah</strong></td>
<td>165 ha</td>
<td>Latin serus = late ripening</td>
<td>Isère in France Natural crossing of Dureza (from the Ardèche) and Mondeusse Blanche (from the Savoie)</td>
<td>1781 in the Hermitage wine region under the name Sira</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Merlot</strong></td>
<td>106 ha</td>
<td>From the French word Merle meaning blackbird – a bird which particularly likes berries</td>
<td>Gironde in France Natural crossing of Cabernet Franc (Basque country) and Magdeleine Noire des Charentes (Charentes)</td>
<td>1783–4 in Libourne in the Gironde</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gamaret</strong></td>
<td>104 ha</td>
<td>Invented name based on that of its parents</td>
<td>Switzerland Artificial crossing of Gamay and Reichensteiner (German crossing) carried out in 1970 by Agroscope</td>
<td>Named and put into production in 1990</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Dioilnoir</strong></td>
<td>94 ha</td>
<td>Contraction of the words Dioilly and Pinot Noir, from the parental names</td>
<td>Switzerland Artificial crossing of Pinot Noir and Robin Noir (called Rouge de Dioilly in Valais) carried out in 1970 by Agroscope</td>
<td>Named and put into production in 1989</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ancellotta</strong></td>
<td>26 ha</td>
<td>Derived from the Lancellotti family from Modena, Italy</td>
<td>Emilia-Romagna in Italy Unknown</td>
<td>Unknown</td>
<td>At the end of the 20th century Neutral taste, rich in colour, sugar and acidity, generally used in blended wines as an improving variety.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 and blended wines.

Dôle is a lively Valais wine that is the offspring of the two most widely planted red grapes in Valais: Pinot Noir and Gamay. Together they must account for 85% of the blend, with Pinot Noir the majority grape variety. Other red grapes may be included in the blend: Gamaret, Garanoir, Carminoir, Ancellotta, Dioinoir, Merlot and Syrah are all used. Some add colour to the wine, some give it structure and tannins, while others add a touch of aromatic fun. The ever-present Valais Dôle is capable of a multitude of expressions, reflecting the terroirs and producers. Each one is a new discovery.

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 spicy and even peppery foods.
Sweet Wines.

Few grape-growing areas in the world are suitable for making great sweet wines, called liqueux 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 wineyards!

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 Oechslé, 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.

Pairing with fine food.

The diversity of Valais wines makes pairing with fine food a pleasure. Classic and contemporary pairings offer numerous possibilities, all of which are worth a try!

Come and discover new sensations in two menus designed by two revolutionary researchers of rare flavours: chefs Samuel Destaing and Damien Germanier.

Cheers and Bon Appétit!

“Cooking is an invitation to share, to take a journey into a world of our own which we offer to others.”

YANNICK ALLÉNO
Fantasy Menu.
By Chef Samuel Destaing

A delicate mound of Cape Town langoustines prepared au naturel, on a subtle seafood base, with a citrus- and coriander-infused sea bass tartar and warm flaked cod and spring onion croquettes

Langoustine & Petite Arvine

Ideal for the first course, this dry white wine brings the freshness needed to complement this noble crustacean, its salinity and note of iodine supporting the citrus- and coriander-infused sea bass, with notes of zest and rhubarb, its vibrant acidity and mineral tone being the key players in this pairing.

Skate wings meunière with an almond and pistachio crust, served with a prawn, rocket and preserved lemon tortellino, with a herby beurre nantais

Skate wing & Pinot Gris

The delicate texture of the flesh and lightly-golden almond and pistachio crust, with a soft gambas prawn tortellino, followed by the rich creaminess of the beurre nantais, meant I had to match like with like when picking a wine from the cellar – a full-bodied Pinot Gris, dense, enveloping and able to complement the star of the dish, leaving notes of mango, ripe pineapple and soft spices.

Seared foie gras from Landes with three types of lentil, drops of spicy virgin oil and a duck casserole cooked in a little pot sealed with pastry

Foie gras & Dôle

An earthy dish with a deliciously gourmet twist, paired with an authentic and very old Valais blend, sometimes overlooked as a top grade wine. A gorgeous Dôle from a warm year will win you over with its intense aromas of jammy red and black fruits, and hints of coffee and liquorice. Smooth and easy on the palate, its fleeting tannins cut through the natural fat of the liver, the mix of pinot noir and gamay combine perfectly with the lasting flavours of this dish.

Local lamb served three ways with oriental spices, on a duo of fine grain semolina and quinoa couscous, with a light gravy

Lamb three ways & Syrah

An interpretation with oriental influences, lamb three ways strikes a chord with this wine’s gentle southern and spicy notes. With aromas of ground pepper and clove, and a pure and intense fruitiness, Syrah is, for me, the ideal partner, due to its perfectly balanced flavour which complements the tenderest local lamb.

Selection of cheeses from our cheese trolley, sweet barberry and fig chutney, and other relishes

Cheese & Païen

We make it a point of honour to display a varied selection of cheeses at the right temperature and maturity, perfect for sampling with a rich and opulent white wine – a ripe and sunny Païen, whose natural creaminess will envelope most textures and gently harness their power, while prolonging the flavours of goats’ cheese or particularly mature cheese.

A little concoction by our pastry chef:
“Essence of pineapple” with Victoria pineapple and Granny Smith iced parfait with black truffle, crunchy coconut and puffed rice nuggets.

Pineapple & semi-sweet Muscat

The pastry chef showcases heaps of freshness with his original use of Victoria pineapples and Granny Smith apples with hints of tarragon. Echoing this combination, this lively Muscat is like biting into crisp exotic fruits such as lychee, melon and fresh grape. Sweet and fresh on the palate, it won’t overpower the gentle sweetness of the menu’s closing act.
Bicentenary Menu.
By Chef Damien Germanier

This menu was served at the bicentenary celebration of Valais joining the Swiss Confederation. To make the moment more festive, we sat the guests around large tables of 12 making for a truly gourmet sharing experience.

Butcher’s choice:
Roggen Hérens beef burger: burger with a rye bun, wafers of local cheese
Rye & Gamay

Inspired by the American sandwich, I wanted to produce an original flavour on the palate, based entirely on local produce. Having rye as a star player was vital. The burger’s sweet and savoury element and the rustic note of the rye clearly led me to a pairing with a magnificent Gamay, fresh and fruity, the freshness exploding on the palate, leaving an aftertaste of pure pleasure.

Valais pâté, prepared with Hérens beef, dried apricots and Abricotine
Beef with apricots & Amigne

I wanted this pâté to encapsulate the Valais terroir. With a pronounced taste of apricot, I paired it with an Amigne de Vétroz, which is between one and two beers on the sweetness scale. The light sweetness often gives hints of apricots, apricot blossom and more exotic citrus fruits. The subtle hint of bitterness at the end recalls the rustic element in the rye bun.

For me, it is a magical pairing.

Trout poached in Pinot Noir
Trout & Pinot Noir

Whilst researching traditional Valais cookery, I found this old recipe for trout poached in Pinot Noir. It was a lovely surprise, after almost two centuries in oblivion, to find the pairing of Pinot Noir and fish. Pinot Noir is a very delicate wine, and the perfect partner for this freshwater fish.

White wine soup with Valais-style toasts
Soup & Fendant

An old recipe, and a very simple one to follow, using a reduction of white wine, stock and cream. Served with a little bruschetta topped with locally cured ham. I would pair a Fendant with the white wine soup. This wine is a key player in Valais. I’m partial to the mineral taste in Fendant and its crisp finish. For me, Fendant is the wine that reveals its terroir the most - the landscape seen through the bottom of the glass.

Génépi-steeped beef with seasonal vegetables
Braised beef & Cornalin

Modernising beef casserole is never easy. Beef casserole can often conjure up comforting childhood memories. Here I wanted to pair it with a Cornalin or Rouge du Pays, with their gorgeous notes of black juicy cherries. Punchy on the palate, with lovely soft tannins - this pairing is noteworthy.

Raclette version 2.0: emulsion of raclette cheese on a bed of fingerling potatoes and gherkins
Cheese & Johannisberg

The cheese is melted and blended into a rich and buttery sauce with a dash of white wine. I wanted to cut through its richness with a slightly robust note. A Johannisberg is typical of Valais, with robust notes of bitter almonds and a lovely buttery note which really makes it the ideal match for this dish.

Local apricot tart with ice cream infused with saffron from Lens
Apricot & Ermitage Grain Noble

To round off this feast, a beautiful tart with local apricots, simultaneously sweet and acidulous accompanied by saffron ice cream. I'd suggest a rich wine such as Ermitage Grain Noble, preferably one that has been aged for a few years, to mature its beautiful aromas of truffles and springwood. This wine retains a lovely acidity despite the noble rot. A complete delight!
**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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