

# Red Muscat



## Origin

What is particular about this red-colored type of Muscat is that it has only female blossoms and consequently has to rely upon cross-fertilization. Older sources indicate its land of origin as Dalmatia. In Alto Adige, the variety spread only to individual vineyards by means of plant material that originated from the research station in San Michele all'Adige. The same thing occurred in Istria, where the winegrowing research station in Parenzo played an important role. The two research institutes carried out an active exchange at the time of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. The first Red Muscats were presented in 1886 at a wine exhibition in Bolzano. The San Michele research institute also presented a Red Muscat for the first time at the Bolzano Spring Wine Market in 1905.

## Distribution

Throughout the world, the area of cultivation amounts to 80 hectares (198 acres). On the decrease in Italy, with 7 hectares (17 acres) in Alto Adige, 5 hectares (12 acres) in Trentino, and 4 hectares (10 acres) in Friuli. In Istria, 3 hectares (7 acres) are still counted today. In Alto Adige, the variety has increased from 6 hectares (15 acres) in 1990 to its present 7 hectares (17 acres) as a result of its aromatic characteristics. Half of the area of cultivation is found in Oltradige.

## Vines

This variety is not very fruitful and consequently also irregular with its yields. Only between 2,000 and 5,000 kilos can be harvested per hectare (1,800 to 4,500 pounds per acre). That is also due to the small, seedless berries which are found on medium-sized bunches along with normally developed, larger berries. The grapes have a reddish-blue color covered with a wax layer. This variety matures earlier than Yellow Muscat and is for the most part harvested in early October. Because of the thin skins, though, it is at risk of rot. Red Muscat therefore requires well-ventilated but warm locations up to 400 meters (1,300 feet) above sea level. It produces the best results in light soils.

## Wine

Red Muscat is suitable only for sweet dessert wines, since in the dry version, it demonstrates too little structure and too many bitter tones. The winegrowers normally leave the grapes hanging on the vines so long that they shrink somewhat. Added to this, the vineyards have to be protected with nets to keep the birds from eating the grapes. And the subsequent drying of the grapes in small baskets under the roofs of wineries is a widespread practice. The wines that are vinted as sweet distinguish themselves through aromas of rose petals, red currants, and spices. The fruity-aromatic wines do not have any pressing tones of nutmeg.