

Kerner



Origin

The variety came into existence in Weinsberg, Germany in 1929 as a cross between Trollinger and White Riesling. It was named after the poet and physician Justinus Kerner. Out of all of the new German varieties, Kerner is the most widespread in Germany after 1969. A high sugar level paired with high yield capabilities helped the variety break through here up to the 1990s. After 1995, though, the area of cultivation shrank dramatically by 4,200 hectares (10,400 acres) to the current state of 2,400 hectares (6,672 acres).

Distribution

Outside of its homeland, Kerner has found a loyal fan base above all in Alto Adige, where today 129 hectares (319 acres) are planted with the variety. Otherwise, it has found a certain degree of attention in the neighboring province of Trentino (25 hectares/62 acres) and curiously enough in Japan with 300 hectares (741 acres). The first experimental plantings were made in a variety of locations in Alto Adige as early as 1970. The variety's good winter hardiness led to it being planted in the Isarco Valley in areas threatened by frost starting from 1981. Back in 1990, there were still only 5 hectares (12 acres) planted with Kerner in the entire province. Only later was the variety planted to a greater degree at high elevations, including outside of the Isarco Valley which, however, with its portion of 129 hectares (319 acres), remains the most important area of production.

Vines

The increase in Alto Adige is to be traced back to the prominent aromatic quality which the variety develops here. The medium-sized, often shouldered but otherwise conical bunches have loose berries and are at first yellowish-green in color, before changing to a reddish-yellow when fully mature. The variety is especially distinguished by delivering a high level of sugar with, at the same time, a good acidity structure. The aroma spectrum ranges from tangerines, melons, and passion fruit to lemon balm and sage. Locations with a sunny exposure between 600 and 900 meters (2,000 and 3,000 feet) above sea level are especially favorable to the variety.

Wine

In order for the wines to not become too alcoholic but still maintain their intensity of aroma, the selection of the right time for the harvest takes on a decisive importance. The wines are generally vinted as dry (less than 4 g/l residual sugar).