

Road to a grand cru

Could the wines made from locally respected Hungarian terroirs like Nagy-Eged and Sikhegy reach the heights of the terroirs of the Côte D'OR, Burgundy?

Abstract

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Motivation for choosing the topic

Before, during, and after my Diploma studies wines made from Pinot Noir and Chardonnay had always interested me.

For many people, Burgundy is the home of the world's best Pinot Noirs, and Chardonnays. The demand and price points are so high for these wines, that I think no one can drink or taste as much Burgundian Pinots or Chardonnays as he wants. It is obvious that the region is among the best in the world, and there is a certain demand for these wines.

I heard that Eger in Hungary has some similarities in terms of factors that has an effect on winemaking. I wanted to draw up a comparative analysis, focusing on geology and terroir concept, climate, grape varieties, viticulture and viniculture.

By choosing this topic I have managed to dig deeper and learn more about these factors. After the analysis I think I have a better understanding about these factors, and more importantly, the two wine regions.

Methodology

I selected the factors of geology, terroir concept, climate, grape varieties, viticulture and viniculture.

I drew up a comparative analysis, focusing on geology and terroir concept, climate, grape varieties, viticulture and viniculture.

During my research I did interviews, with 2 Hungarian winemakers (Gál Tibor and Bukolyi Marcell) who produce wine in the above-mentioned Hungarian terroirs. Beyond that I used international literature, wine magazines and various internet sources.

Content

Introduction

The introduction consists my statement for the thesis, followed by a short introduction of the Côte D'OR and Eger.

The Côte D'OR versus Eger

The two wine regions separated, I analysed the different factors effecting wine and quality.

The French region:

Geology: First, the geology of the Côte D'OR. Within my research I explored all the different types of limestone structures, and their building blocks that can be found across the fault line.

Climate: The climate of the Côte is continental, though it has moderating influences coming from different sources and directions. These influences have an effect on its overall climate.

Grape varieties: Although there are several cultivated varieties in the French region, the two most popular are the Pinot Noir and the Chardonnay. The two grape varieties accounts for more than 90% of the cultivated grapes. The chapter consist an overview of these two varieties.

Viticulture and viniculture: An overview about the most typical techniques used in the Côte D'OR.

Eger (Nagy-Eged and Síkhegy):

Geology: I focused on two terroirs. One unique, the Nagy-Eged with limestone soil, and Síkhegy with rhyolite soil. The rhyolite soil type is much more common in Eger then limestone.

Climate: Eger also has a continental climate. It has fewer moderating influences compared to the French region, thus the climate can be considered more even.

Grape varieties: In the region, a lot of grape varieties are permitted to use for quality winemaking. The law however differentiate what grape varieties can be used for certain quality of wine. Most of these varieties are early to mid-ripening.

Viticulture and viniculture: An overview about the most typical techniques used in Eger wine region Hungary.

Comparisons of the two regions geology, climate, grape varieties, and their viticulture and viniculture: Comparisons of the above-mentioned factors.

Conclusion

I have analysed the different factors affecting style and quality of a wine for both regions. I did this because I believe that apart from marketing and branding, a certain style and quality is essential to sell a wine to a consumer. In terms of geology the Côte d'Or seems to be the more unique and more diverse region. The climate characteristics are pretty much the same, although Eger is the more calculable climate of the two. In Eger many grape varieties are cultivated. This reflects the idea that in the Hungarian region the producers are focusing on blends, which they think can transfer the terroir of their region more effectively. In Burgundy they believe in single varietal wines. Their goal is the same. To reflect the terroir in their wines.

In terms of vinification, producers of the Côte d'Or are in an advanced position. They have mastered the two grape varieties to an extent, that the average quality of their wines is very high. No other region can produce such outstanding quality wines from these two grape varieties. I believe with time, winemakers in Eger can also master the certain style they decided to produce. In Eger the future seems to be the blend.

What should Eger do in terms of marketing and branding of the region to boost sales and revenues? Well, that should be a topic of another essay.