

KERNER

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AWRI

BACKGROUND

Kerner (kair-ner) is the result of a cross of Schiava Grossa (syn. Trollinger) and Riesling made at Weinsberg, Germany, in 1929. This parentage has been confirmed by DNA profiling. Authorised in 1969, it has become the most widely planted of the 20th century German crosses. At present, Kerner is the fifth most planted variety in Germany with 3510ha (2010). It is grown in most regions (mainly Rheinhessen and Rheinpfalz) but does not make up more than 5% of the total planted area of any region. There are also small areas in Italy (mainly Alto Adige), Switzerland, UK, Canada and Japan. In Australia the current area is very small and there are at least two wine producers (Barossa Valley and Murray Darling).

VITICULTURE

Budburst is late and maturity is mid-season. Vigour is high. Bunches are medium and compact with medium berries. Yield is moderate. Kerner is popular with German growers because, compared with Riesling, it has higher and more reliable yield and can be grown in a wider range of sites. It also has the ability to ripen to higher Brix levels than Mueller-Thurgau. Cane pruning is used in Germany. It is more susceptible to powdery mildew than average but has good cold tolerance.

For further information on this and other emerging varieties, contact Marcel Essling (marcel.essling@awri.com.au or 08 8313 6600) at The Australian Wine Research Institute to arrange the presentation of the Alternative Varieties Research to Practice program in your region.

WINE

Wines are fresh and racy, similar to Riesling but with more body and lower acidity. Descriptors include white fruits, apple, grapefruit, mango and Muscat. Although the Australian experience has been mainly in warm to hot regions - where the wines have been good - Kerner may have its best potential in cool regions.