

MONDEUSE NOIRE

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AWRI

BACKGROUND

Mondeuse (mon-DERS) Noire is an old variety from eastern France (Isère, Drôme, Hautes-Alpes) that has spread to other countries including Portugal and Switzerland. There is also a Mondeuse Blanche which has a parent-offspring relationship with Mondeuse Noire (as shown by DNA analysis). Therefore, Mondeuse Noire is either a half-sibling or a grandparent of Syrah. This may explain why Mondeuse Noire has been called Grosse Syrah in the Jura, France. Other synonyms include Gros Rouge (Switzerland), Maldoux (Jura), Persagne (Ain), Petite Persaigne (Rhone), Plant Maldoux (Jura), Savoyan (Isère) and Rodo (Portugal). Mondeuse Noire is one of the main varieties used for the appellations of Vin de Savoie and Bugey (Savoie). The global area of Mondeuse Noire in 2010 was 1404 hectares, mostly in France, having increased significantly since 2000. Outside of Europe the largest area may be in California; however, it is difficult to obtain a reliable estimate because Californian statistics do not separate Mondeuse Noire from Refosco dal Penduncolo, even though DNA analysis has shown they are different varieties. In Australia—where it is most often known as just Mondeuse—the planted area is tiny. It is said that, like Durif, it was brought to north-eastern Victoria by Francois de Castella early in the 20th century. Currently, there are at least five wine producers, mainly in central and north-east Victoria.

VITICULTURE

Budburst is early and maturity is mid-season. Vigour is moderate to high. Bunches are medium to large and can range from loose to compact with small to medium berries. Yield is relatively high, comparable with Grenache in Australia. Spur pruning is most often used in both France and Australia. In France, Mondeuse Noire is said to be quite susceptible to mildews; in contrast, it is 'tolerant' to mildews in Australia. Susceptibility to drought is high.

WINE

Mondeuse Noire wines are well-coloured, aromatic and tannic with good ageing potential. Descriptors include bitter cherry, dark plum and fruity. In hot climates it has good acid retention. It is often blended with other varieties such as Gamay, Pinot Noir and Poulsard in France; and with Shiraz and Cabernet Sauvignon in Australia.

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.