

# CINSAUT

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## BACKGROUND

Cinsaut (SIN-soh) originated in the south of France where it was first mentioned in the 17th century. Although it is still a major variety in France (21,000ha in 2010), the planted area has more than halved since the late 1970s and is largely restricted to Provence, Languedoc and Roussillon. In the 19th century, large areas were planted in Algeria and Morocco (where it is still the most planted variety) in order to supply wine to France. In South Africa it was the most important variety until the 1990s — today there are just 2000ha or so. There are also significant plantings in Italy (Puglia), Chile and Lebanon. The global area (2010) is 36,000ha (25% less than in 2000).

Synonyms include Black Malvoisie (California), Black Prince and Blue Imperial (Australia), Cargadora (Chile), Cinqsaut (Languedoc), Cinsault (France, Algeria, Morocco, Tunisia) Grecau (Sardinia), Hermitage (South Africa), Marroquin, Marrouquin and Ottavianello (Puglia), Picardan Noir (Var), Piquepoul d'Uzès, Prunelat and Prunellas (Gironde), Samsó and Sinsó (Spain).

Cinsaut has been in Australia for many years but now there is only 60ha or so planted, with at least 20 wine producers, mainly in South Australia.

## VITICULTURE

Budburst is late and maturity is mid-season. Vigour is moderate with spreading growth habit. Bunches are medium to large and well-filled to compact with medium tough-skinned berries. Yield is high. Spur pruning is mainly used. Susceptibility to foliar and bunch fungal diseases is average, but risk of trunk diseases is said to be high. It is well adapted to hot and dry sites.

## WINE

Cinsaut wines are generally light-bodied, soft, fruity and aromatic with low tannin. Most often it is regarded as a 'workhorse' variety, but wines from low-yielding, dry-farmed bush vines in France, South Africa and Chile can be medium-bodied, well balanced and delicately perfumed with fresh strawberry and cherry notes. In the south of France and in Australia, Cinsaut is mainly used in blends with Carignan, Grenache and other varieties. It can produce good quality rosé wines.

*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.*