

Blaufränkisch

By Peter Dry, Emeritus Fellow,
The Australian Wine Research Institute



BACKGROUND

Blaufränkisch (*BLAUW-frank-ish*) is grown throughout central Europe but it is best known in Austria where it is the second-most important red wine variety after Zweigelt (a hybrid of Blaufränkisch and St. Laurent). In Hungary, where it has the largest area of any variety, it is known as Kékfrankos; and is the main variety used for the famous Egri Bikaver ('Bull's Blood') wine of the Eger region in the east. There are more than 80 synonyms in use, including Lemberger or Blauer Lemberger in Germany (Württemberg), Frankovka in the Czech Republic and Croatia, Franconia in Italy and Modra Frankinja in Slovenia. The global area (2016) was 17,180ha (up 22% from 2000) with the largest areas in Hungary (7260ha) and Austria (2808ha). Slovakia, Czech Republic, Serbia, Slovenia and Croatia also have significant areas. Its popularity has been increasing in recent times, both in Europe and internationally. For example, in the USA it has been planted in Virginia, Washington and New York states. At this stage, the planted area

in Australia is small, with just two wine producers: one of which is in the Adelaide Hills (Hahndorf Hill, the first to use the variety), the other is in northern Tasmania.

VITICULTURE

Budburst is early and maturity is mid-season (in Australia). Vigour is high with semi-erect growth habit. Bunches are medium and loose with medium black berries. Yield is moderate. Spur pruning is successful in Australia. It has average susceptibility to *Oidium* and downy mildew but is reasonably tolerant of *Botrytis*. It is most likely to be suited to cool regions in Australia.

WINE

Blaufränkisch wines are well-structured with good colour, firm acidity, medium to full body and generous flavour. Descriptors include black cherry, raspberry, dark chocolate, fennel and spicy. Wines can have good ageing potential. It has been likened to a 'full-bodied Pinot Noir' or a 'dense Beaujolais'

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