

# Alicante Bouschet

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## BACKGROUND

Alicante Bouschet (ahlee-KAHN-tay boo-shay) is a red-fleshed variety that was the result of hybridisation from the mid-19th century in the south of France. The full name is 'Alicante Henry Bouschet' but it is usually known as 'Alicante Bouschet'. Henri Bouschet crossed Grenache Noir and Petit Bouschet (Aramon Noir x Teinturier) — the resultant progeny named 'Alicante Henry Bouschet' and 'Alicante Bouschet numbers 1, 2, 5, 6, 7, 12 and 13' were subsequently released. Vineyards today are a mix of 'Alicante Henry Bouschet' and 'Alicante Bouschet number 2' (distinct but similar siblings). Synonyms include: Alicante, Dalmatinka (Croatia), Garnacha Tintorera (Spain), and Kambusa (Bosnia and Herzegovina). The global area in 2010 was 39,000ha (approximately doubled since 1990). The largest area is in Spain (52%), where more than half is found in central Castilla La Mancha. There is also a large

area in Galicia. In France (13% of global area) it is mostly grown in the south, mainly in Hérault where it is permitted to be used — unlike other red-fleshed hybrids with American *Vitis* parentage. It is also grown in Portugal (9%), Italy, Turkey, Hungary, Croatia, Cyprus and elsewhere. Outside of Europe, the largest areas are in Chile (11%), USA (California), Argentina, Uruguay, Algeria and Morocco. Alicante Bouschet was introduced to Australia in the 1960s but there are currently only 10 or so wine producers (Barossa Valley, Margaret River, Riverland, Eden Valley, Adelaide Plains, North-East Victoria and Hunter Valley).

## VITICULTURE

Budburst is early and maturity early to mid-season. Vigour is moderate with semi-erect growth habit. Bunches are medium to large and well-filled to compact with medium berries with red pulp and dark red juice. Yield is moderate. It is pruned to spurs and

reported to be heat tolerant. It is susceptible to downy mildew and bunch rot, but less so to oidium, and has low resistance to wind.

## WINE

Alicante Bouschet is generally regarded as a low-quality variety in most regions of the world because its wine lacks character. It is mainly used to add colour in blends; however, its value as a colour enhancement variety is limited by the instability of red pigments in finished wine. One of the few places in the world where Alicante Bouschet wines are looked on more favourably is the hot Alentejo region in southern Portugal where it has been used for varietal wines.

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

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