

Quick Guide

Chapter 8.

The Designation of Origin. Tell me where you're from...

THE CLASSIFICATION OF WINES IN SPAIN.

- We frequently hear about table wines, country wines, vineyard wines, single-estate wines, signature wines, etc., but who do we know what details need to be taken into account to include a wine under one of these labels?
 - All classifications are defined by law and they vary according to the level of control applied to them: for each level a definition is given of the production, winemaking and ageing zones, grape varieties that can be used and the maximum kilos per vine that can be harvested to improve the quality of the wines.
 - The minimum level is *vino de mesa* (table wine) which may also be called *vino de la tierra* (country wine) providing that the viticultural territory from which it originates has been delimited, taking into account certain environmental and growing conditions that may confer upon the wine specific characteristics.
 - Within quality wines we have wines with a geographical origin, wines with a designation of origin and wines with a qualified designation of origin (there are currently two in Spain: Rioja and Priorat).
 - There are also *finca* (estate) wines (we may also find the mention *pago*): *Pago* is understood to mean a very tightly delimited area, smaller than the municipality where it is located, and a very specific microclimate and characteristics that grant the wine certain special qualities.
 - Over the centuries all the winegrowing regions have selected these small enclaves that have received different names: *Crus* in Bordeaux and Champagne, *Clos* in the Bourgogne, *Vigneti* in Italy, *Pagos* in Spain.
 - A signature wine does not enter into the criteria of a wine's designation. It is simply that the style that the oenologist gives to the wine is so characteristic that it can easily be identified.
 - From now on we will understand the names mentioned on labels and so we must not take any notice when people say: "that a wine with a designation of origin is always better than a table wine and for that reason they are more expensive." We see that the designation depends, solely, on the growing and control areas, and that the price is not of great importance..
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