

CHANGES IN WINE REGULATIONS FOR UK WINE PRODUCERS – 2009

Regulations 491/2009 and 607/2009 introduce some changes to wine making requirements and labelling of wines. In addition they make provision for a new category of wine allowed to show one or more varieties and the vintage.

1. Wine making practices

Enrichment limits

The reduced enrichment limit permitted from 2009 harvest onwards is 3% increase in total alcohol (with the possibility of an additional 0.5% in poor years if requested by the industry and approved by the European Commission).

The minimum actual alcohol remains 8.5% vol for wine without geographical designation, in effect the minimum natural alcoholic strength is now 5.5% unless the additional 0.5% enrichment has been allowed. The minimum actual alcoholic strength for Protected Designation of Origin wines (Quality Wine in the UK) and Protected Geographical Indication wines (Regional Wine in the UK) is 4.5%

The maximum total alcohol level for enriched wines remains 11.5% for white wine and 12% for red and rosé wine. The maximum level does not apply to Quality Wine.

Sulphur dioxide maximum limits

From 2009 harvest the maximum levels for total sulphur dioxide are

- red wines 150mg/litre
- white and rosé wines 200mg/litre
(higher levels for wines with 5+grms/litre residual sugar as set out in Oenological Practices Regulation 606/2009).
- quality sparkling wine 185mg/litre (unchanged)

Sweetening

Requirements for sweetening wines have been altered and there is no differentiation in sweetening provisions between enriched and non-enriched wines. The total (actual + potential) alcoholic strength of wines may not be increased by more than 4% vol. The maximum total alcoholic strength remains 15%, except for Quality Wines (PDO category) which have not been enriched.

2. Labelling

Introduction of new labelling requirements

Wines which are labelled before 31 December 2010 in compliance with requirements in force before 1 August 2009 may be marketed until used up.

Wine Standards

www.food.gov.uk/wine

Provenance of Wine

Wines without geographical designation will be allowed to show country as “Wine of England (or Wales)” or “Product of England” or “Produced in England” or “English Wine” instead of “Wine of United Kingdom” or equivalent. Other wines (Quality, Regional and sparkling) must also use one of these formats for the country.

Descriptor “wine”

This must be shown for wine without geographical designation where the Provenance descriptor does not include the term “Wine”.

Varietal Wine – new designation

Wines from **2009** and subsequent vintages which are not submitted and approved for either the Quality Wine Scheme or the Regional Wine Scheme may be entitled to describe one or more varieties and/or the vintage using the new descriptor of “Varietal Wine” (subject to national legislation) if they go through a Certification Process prior to sale of the wine. Winery records must show details of production for wine intended for this category.

Details of the Certification Process will be established by Defra and published in due course.

3. Quality and Regional Wine Schemes

The Schemes will continue to be available for growers and producers who wish to market their wine under the Schemes (details in current Notices to Growers on the website). These wines will provisionally fall into the new wine categories of Protected Designation of Origin (for Quality Wine) and Protected Geographical Indication (for Regional Wine) which are already used for other food products.

The UK will have to submit details of the Schemes to the European Commission by 31 December 2011 if the industry wishes for the Schemes to continue beyond then.

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