

## NOTICE TO VINE GROWERS AND WINE PRODUCERS

### QUALITY WINE SCHEME 2006/2009

1. This document replaces Notice No. 31 (March 2006) to vine growers and wine producers. It gives the full details of the Quality Wine Scheme for wines produced in the wine years 2006 to 2008 and the conditions, which must be fulfilled in order for a wine to be eligible for Quality Wine status.

2. The Scheme is designed to meet the legislative requirements of EU Council Regulation 1493/1999 of 14 July 1999 (Articles 54 – 58, and Annex VI) and EU Commission Regulation 1607/2000 of 24 July 2000 (the Quality Wine psr<sup>1</sup> Regulation). However, the Scheme is concerned solely with the production of still Quality Wine; it does not cover other categories of Quality Wine such as Quality Liqueur, Sparkling or Semi-Sparkling Wines. For the purposes of this notice these regulations will be referred to as Reg. 1493/1999 and Reg. 1607/2000.

3. In the United Kingdom, the following conditions apply:

#### **A. DEMARCATION - NAMES OF SPECIFIED REGIONS (ARTICLE 2 of Reg. 1607/2000)**

There are two specified regions for the production of Quality Wine under the Scheme:

ENGLISH VINEYARDS  
WELSH VINEYARDS

Within each of the specified regions only wine produced from vines growing below a height of 220 metres above sea level are eligible for the Scheme.

#### **B. ADDITION OF WINE SECTOR PRODUCTS NOT ORIGINATING IN THE SPECIFIED REGION (ANNEX VI, point D, of Reg. 1493/1999)**

No wine sector products originating outside a specified region shall be used in making a Quality Wine of that region (but see Section E).

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<sup>1</sup> where the term 'Quality Wine' is used in this notice it should be taken to read 'Quality Wine psr' (i.e. Quality Wine produced in a specified region) as defined in Council Regulation 1493/1999.

**C. MAKING OF A QUALITY WINE IN AN AREA OUTSIDE SPECIFIED REGION CONCERNED (ANNEX VI, point D of Reg. 1493/1999)**

A potential Quality Wine may be produced, i.e. vinified, in an area outside the specified region concerned provided that:

- (a) this takes place in a county in immediate proximity to i.e. contiguous with, the specified region.

In all cases prior authorisation must be obtained from the Wine Standards Branch of the Food Standards Agency (WSB), who will undertake the necessary controls.

**D. MINIMUM NATURAL AND TOTAL ALCOHOLIC STRENGTHS (ANNEX VI, point E, of Reg. 1493/1999) AND ENRICHMENT (ANNEX V, points C, D and G of Reg. 1493/1999)**

The minimum natural alcoholic strength, i.e. before enrichment, shall not be less than 6.0% volume.

The increase in alcoholic strength by enrichment (in accordance with the procedures laid down in Annex V, point C, of Reg. 1493/1999) shall not exceed 3.5% volume<sup>2</sup>. The advisory must weight conversion table issued by the WSB may be used in conjunction with a suitably calibrated hydrometer or refractometer to calculate the natural alcoholic strength of the wine before enrichment and the total alcoholic strength of the wine after enrichment.

The total (i.e. actual plus potential) alcoholic strength shall not be less than 9% volume. However, subject to EU approval, a white wine that has not been enriched may have a minimum total alcoholic strength of 8.5% volume. Producers who wish to seek such EU approval should write giving details to:

Philip Munday  
Secretary  
Quality Wine Committee  
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs  
Wine Team, Area 8C  
9 Millbank c/o Nobel House  
17 Smith Square  
London SW1 P 3JR  
Tel Number: 020 7238 3190  
Fax Number: 020 7238 5063  
Email: philip.munday@defra.gsi.gov.uk

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<sup>2</sup> If a potential Quality Wine is enriched beyond the maximum limits for the total alcoholic strength of table wine (11.5% for white wine; 12% for red wine) it cannot be marketed as a table wine if it subsequently fails to attain Quality Wine status. Similarly a potential Quality Wine with an actual alcoholic strength below the table wine minimum of 8.5% cannot be marketed as table wine if it subsequently fails to attain Quality Wine status.

**E. ACIDIFICATION, DE-ACIDIFICATION AND SWEETENING (ANNEX VI, point G, of Reg. 1493/1999)**

The conditions and limits on acidification/de-acidification are those laid down for the production of table wine.

Sweetening must conform to the conditions of Annex V, point F, of Reg. 1493/1999 concerning the production of table wine, and must take place in the specified region or in a county in immediate proximity to i.e. contiguous with, the specified region.

The sweet-reserve used shall be limited to grape must<sup>3</sup>, concentrated grape must<sup>4</sup> or rectified concentrated grape must<sup>5</sup> which, with the exception of rectified concentrated grape must, shall originate in the same specified region as the wine being sweetened.

**F. VINE VARIETIES (ANNEX VI, point B, para. 2, of Reg. 1493/1999 and Article 24 of Reg. 479/2008)**

Community regulations on the production of Quality Wine explicitly exclude the use of wine obtained from non-*Vitis vinifera* varieties. Quality Wine therefore can only be obtained from vine varieties shown on the list published by the Organisation Internationale de la Vigne et du Vin (OIV <http://www.oiv.int/>). In addition they may not be obtained from : Noah, Othello, Isabelle, Jacquez, Clinton and Herbemont. Vineyard Plots intended for the production of Quality Wine may only contain permitted vine varieties. For the purposes of Quality Wine production a plot shall consist of one or more rows of vines, which form a clearly distinguishable entity and consist of one or more authorised or recommended vine varieties.

- 3 The liquid product obtained naturally or by physical process from fresh grapes, and having an actual alcoholic strength of not more than 1 %.
- 4 uncaramelised grape juice obtained by partial dehydration of grape juice, and having an actual alcoholic strength of not more than 1 %.
- 5 The liquid uncaramelised product which is obtained by partial dehydration of grape must and which has undergone authorised treatment for de-acidification and elimination of constituents other than sugar: it must have an actual alcoholic strength of not more than 1 %.

**G. CULTIVATION METHODS (ANNEX VI, point C, para. 2, of Reg. 1493/1999)**

Quality Wine shall not be produced from vines, which have been subject to irrigation unless prior authorisation has been obtained. Requests for authorisation to irrigate mature vines should be lodged with the Secretary of the Quality Wine Committee (contact details at the end of section D).

**H. WINE-MAKING METHODS (ANNEX VI, point C, of Reg. 1493/1999)**

During the process of harvesting, wine-making and storage, wine-makers must ensure that table and potential individual Quality Wines are distinguishable and that an enforcement officer can identify at any time whether a particular must or wine is destined for Quality Wine.

Particular attention must be paid to the compilation of accurate and up-to-date records on the production processes and movement of must and wine in accordance with EC regulations. Either the WSB winery record sheet (form WSB 20) or an alternative record system approved by the WSB must be used. The detailed requirements will be a matter for the WSB. Further advice can be sought from their Inspectors.

**I. MAXIMUM YIELDS (ANNEX VI, point I, of Reg. 1493/1999)**

For the purpose of the Scheme the permitted yield for vines producing wine destined for Quality Wine shall not exceed a maximum of 80 hl/ha for each specified region. If the yield exceeds this figure the entire harvest shall be ineligible for Quality Wine production.

**J. ASSESSMENT OF QUALITY WINES (ANNEX VI, point J, of Reg. 1493/1999 and ARTICLE 8 of Reg. 1607/2000)**

Each potential Quality Wine shall be subject to a post bottling analytical test and an organoleptic test at the expense of the applicant. In order to obtain Quality Wine status, a wine must pass both tests.

The analytical test is designed to:

- (a) rule out wines with compositional characteristics likely to render them unsuitable as Quality Wine; and
- (b) give information, which will aid in promoting consistency of quality.

The following measurements shall be made by a designated laboratory, using approved testing techniques and, where applicable, the wine shall conform to the stipulated parameters.

1. Actual Alcoholic Strength

A minimum of 8.5% actual alcoholic strength or 5.5% for wines having a natural alcoholic strength of not less than 10%.

2. Reducing Sugars

No parameters set: for information only.

3. pH

No parameters set: for information only.

4. Total Acidity

A minimum of 4 g/l expressed as tartaric acid.

5. Volatile Acidity

A maximum as described in point B, para. 1(a), (b) or (c), of Annex V to Reg.1493/1999, as read with Article 20 of, and Annex XIII to, Commission Regulation 1622/2000 (to be recorded for sweet/red wines only).

6. Total Sulphur Dioxide

A maximum as defined in point A, paras. 1 and 2 (a) and (b), of Annex V to Reg. 1493/1999.

7. Free Sulphur Dioxide

A maximum of 45 mg/l for dry wines as defined in Article 16 of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 753/2002. A maximum of 60 mg/l for other wines.

For an experimental period covering wines with free sulphur dioxide levels<sup>6</sup> of between 15 mg/l and 5 mg/l, the following additional requirements will apply:

- a) the analysis is carried out after at least 28 days after the last day of bottling the wine;
- b) residual sugar is below 5 mg/l;
- c) pH is below 3.1;
- d) total acid is above 7 g/l as tartaric;
- e) free acetaldehyde is below 1 mg/l; and
- f) bottles labelled with a printed "consume by date" that is no later than 12 months from the first day of bottling the wine.

The above parameters will demonstrate that effective oenological techniques have been used, and they will ensure that the wine is stable until its "consume by date".

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<sup>6</sup> In practice, the fermentation process will result in the production of some free sulphur dioxide

Condition 8 e) will require an acetaldehyde test in addition to the other analytical tests required under the scheme. The current cost of the acetaldehyde test is approximately £45.00 plus VAT.

At the end of the experimental period, the rules will be reviewed by the Quality Wine Committee.

9. Copper A maximum of

0.5 mg/l.

10. Iron

A maximum of 8 mg/l.

11. Sterility

There must be no indication of yeast or bacteria liable to cause spoilage of the wine.

12. Protein stability

The wine must remain unchanged in appearance after being held at 70°C for 15 minutes and subsequently cooled to 20°C.

A blind organoleptic test will be undertaken by a Tasting Panel consisting of not fewer than 5 and not more than 7 persons, drawn from the four categories of tasters, with a minimum of 2 tasters from the categories (b), (c) or (d) below. A minimum of two thirds (66%) of the tasters will need to give a pass mark in each category in order for a wine to pass. For example, if there are 5 tasters a minimum of 4 will need to award a pass mark; if there are 6 tasters, a minimum of 4 will need to award a pass mark, and if there are 7 tasters, a minimum of 5 will need to award a pass mark.

The four categories are:

- (a) Producers (either the producers of grapes or the makers of wine);
- (b) The Wine Trade (wholesalers/retailers/wine consultants);
- (c) Consumers; and
- (d) Persons with oenology or wine-making specialism, Masters of Wine, or persons with a diploma in wine or wine making.

The properties of the wine will be evaluated by awarding points for:

(a) colour & clarity	3 points	minimum required to pass	2 points
(b) nose	4 points	minimum required to pass	2 points
(c) taste	13 points	minimum required to pass	8 points

The evaluation will be as follows:

<b>(a)</b>	<b><u>colour and clarity</u></b>	<b>Points</b>
	unacceptable	0 - 1
	acceptable	2 - 3
<b>(b)</b>	<b>nose</b>	
	unacceptable	0
	imperfect	1
	balanced	2
	fine	3 – 4
<b>(c)</b>	<b>taste</b>	
	imperfect	0 - 5
	acceptable	6 - 7
	balanced	8 – 9
	fine	10 - 13

If a wine fails Quality Wine status it can automatically be considered under the Regional Wine Scheme, provided the wine in question meets with the scheme criteria.

The results of the organoleptic test, together with the relevant Analytical Reports, shall be forwarded to the Head of the WSB (see end of notice for contact details).

The organisation and costs of analytical tests, organoleptic tests and the establishment of tasting panels will be a matter for the industry. For this purpose a Recognised Industry Body (RIB) will be appointed. The WSB will ensure that such tests and tastings are undertaken in accordance with the provisions of the Scheme.

Until **31 December 2009**, the RIB for the Scheme will be the ***United Kingdom Vineyards Association (UKVA) Wine Scheme Manager, Corkwise, Campden BRI, Centenary Hall, Coopers Hill Road, Nutfield, Surrey RH1 4HY.***

The UKVA will carry out this task on behalf of all growers, and will recover its costs through a uniform charge on those submitting wines.

#### **K. DESCRIPTION AND LABELLING (ANNEX VII of Reg. 1493/1999)**

Wines successful under the Scheme may carry the descriptor "Quality Wine produced in a specified region" or "Quality Wine psr".

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For labelling purposes, therefore, successful wines produced in the specified region of English Vineyards must be described as:

ENGLISH VINEYARDS  
QUALITY WINE PSR

Successful wines produced in the specified region of Welsh Vineyards must be described as:

WELSH VINEYARDS  
QUALITY WINE PSR

These terms must be grouped together in the same field of vision with other mandatory information, and 'Quality Wine psr' must be shown in lettering not larger than that indicating the specified region. The labelling should conform in all respects with the provisions of Commission Regulation (EC) No. 753/2002 laying down certain rules for applying Council Regulation (EC) No 1493/1999 as regards the description, designation, presentation and protection of certain wine sector products. No other geographical names (except, where appropriate, the name of the vineyard of origin) may be used in addition to, or instead of, the above descriptors.

#### **L. REGULATORY AUTHORITY (ANNEX VII, point G, para 3 of Reg. 1493/1999)**

The WSB is the regulatory authority, which will supervise the requirements and conduct of the Scheme. It will have ultimate responsibility for conferring the status of wines under the Scheme once it is satisfied that all the requirements have been fulfilled. The Head of the WSB, or their direct representative, will notify the applicant, in writing, of such a decision in respect of an individual wine. Only when such notification has been received can the wine, appropriately labelled, be placed on the market. Applicants of wines not meeting the necessary requirements will also be notified in writing.

#### **M. APPLICATIONS**

Set out below are the general application and assessment procedures for the Quality Wine Scheme.

***Application forms for the submission of wine for Quality Status are available from the WSB.*** The forms include the declaration that all the viticultural and vinification conditions of the Scheme have been met and that the wine has been analysed in accordance with the criteria in Section J. The form should be completed by the owner of the wine or his/her representative and sent to the UKVA. Applications will only be accepted if they include an application form, a standard quality wine analysis of the finished bottled wine by a designated laboratory and a cheque covering the full application fee. Two sample bottles, labelled with the application number only, should be sent to WSET, Quality and Regional Wine Schemes, International Wine & Spirit Centre, 39-45 Bermondsey Street, London, SE1 3XF.

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**It will be a requirement for the producer of that wine to keep a bottle in storage for a period of three years, and that this bottle should be marked with the application number and be kept with a copy of the application form.**

The RIB will convene a Tasting Panel in conformity with the rules of the Scheme (see pages 7 & 8), the details of which must be notified to the WSB in advance. If the Tasting Panel feels that a wine has the future potential to reach Quality Wine status (e.g. it is insufficiently mature at the time of tasting) the RIB will advise the producers accordingly and re-submission may be recommended.

The RIB will then forward a tasting summary, failure reports and analysis reports to the WSB. When it is satisfied that all the requirements of the Scheme have been met the WSB will notify successful applicants in writing. Unsuccessful applicants will be similarly notified and reasons given.

If dissatisfied with the result, the applicant may appeal to the WSB within one month of receiving the results. In the case of appeals against the analytical test, the WSB will forward samples for analysis, at the appellant's expense, to a laboratory authorized to undertake official analyses in the wine sector. Where the appeal is against the tasting report, the next available Tasting Panel will examine samples.

A wine which fails and is re-entered at a later date must be submitted under a new application number and be submitted for the analytical test and organoleptic test detailed in Section J.

**Other key points of contact:**

Philip Munday  
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Food and Rural Affairs (Defra)  
Wine Team, Area 8C  
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