

AN EXPLORATION OF CROATIAN WINE

Jasmine Nichols | Dubrovnik, Croatia | Summer 2022 | College of Science

Croatian Wine

Croatia has been growing grapes to produce wine for thousands of years, much like everywhere else in Europe. With its warm Mediterranean climate and wine-loving population, it's no wonder Dubrovnik is surrounded by vineyards. The long warm summers and steady weather give winemakers the perfect conditions to perfect their crops. The grapes used for growing wine are heavily impacted by environmental conditions. Grapes that are grown in warmer temperatures typically make a fuller-body wine, that is high in alcohol and low in acidity. These wines are also known for their fruity tropical aromas which make them quite special in the world of wine. In the surrounding areas of Dubrovnik, the area is mostly known for its native grape varieties, such as Plavac Mali, Pošip, and Dingač (pictured below)



In Class Example

In my very first week abroad, my class took a field trip to a famous wine-growing area near Dubrovnik called Peninsula Pelješac. In this specific vineyard, the grapes are grown in extreme conditions as they are grown on the side of a mountain right above the sea. The angle of the vineyard makes these grapes very susceptible to the sun's energy, taking in the rays directly from the sun, the reflected rays from the sea, and more reflected rays from the rocky mountain soil. These extreme climates make this wine one of the most valued in Croatia with its dark color, lots of tannins, and high alcohol content.

In Comparison to European Wine

In Northern Europe, with colder temperatures and fluctuating weather, the wine that is produced is much lighter in body and has higher acidity. For example, Champagne is grown in extremely harsh weather conditions with the climate being cooler than most vineyards in France. This climate leads to harsh frost, short summers, and heavy rains in late summer. These very challenging conditions make Champagne very difficult to grow since the climate could easily ruin the year's harvest. Due to the lack of warm weather and difficult conditions, the vines are trained to be low to the ground so that they can absorb the little sunlight reflected off of the limestone-based soil. These environmental conditions along with the social capital of Champagne, make it one of the most sought-after and expensive wines in the world.

