

RUTHERGLEN MUSCAT

Made only from *Muscat a Petits Grains Rouge* – Muscat with little red berries. This is known locally as *Rutherglen Brown Muscat*

Uses a modified Solera system, and is almost never a vintage wine. Jancis Robinson describes the production as a combination of solera and estufagem.

Climate: Rutherglen, in the north-east of Victoria, has a hot climate and usually has an 'Indian summer' – so they can achieve longer hang times, allowing for fuller ripening, and the grapes often are allowed to semi-raisin on the vine.

Rutherglen Muscat is classified under 4 description that mark a progression in richness, complexity, intensity and flavour.

Rutherglen Muscat: fresh raisin aromas, rich fruit, clean spirit and great length. Average age is 3-5 years. Residual sweetness 180 - 240 gr/l.

Classic R.M.: displays a greater level of richness and complexity. Produced through the blending of selected parcels of wine often matured in various size of oak casks what gives a dry "rancio" characters. Average age is 6 -10 years. Residual sweetness is 200 – 280 gr/l.

Grand R.M.: higher development displaying and a new level of intensity. Depth and concentration of flavour, mature rancio characters and complexity of texture and flavour. Average age is 11 – 19 years, residual sweetness is 270 – 400 gr/l.

Rare Rutherglen Muscat: rare by name and nature. Fully developed. Displaying extraordinary qualities that result from the blending of selected parcels of the only the very richest and most complete wines in the cellar. It is bottled only tiny quantities each year. These wines have a breathtaking complexity, texture and depth of colour. Minimum age is 20 years. Residual sweetness is 270 – 400 gr/l.

Rutherglen Tokay or Topaque

The wine is lesser known as Topaque. It was originally termed Tokay in the mid 19th century. They saw some similarities with the Hungarian Tokaji wine. Later in the 1970' the Rutherglen Tokay was identified as same as Muscadelle – that with grape in Bordeaux – however this is not part of the Muscat family. In the early 21st century the name Tokay on the label was phased out due to its similarity to the Hungarian term Tokaji. A new name was selected – Topaque – as a preferred option.

It is being phased out, and the full enforcement does not come into effect until 2016.

The change in name to Topaque is part of a wider EU – Australia negotiation that also sees terms like 'Port' and 'Sherry,' which were widely used to label Australian wines, being eliminated. This was negotiated in 2010.

Topaque is often considered to be lighter, finer wine than Rutherglen Muscat with a flavours of candied fruits, honey, toffee and distinctive cold tea character as opposed to the heavier raisin and chocolate notes of Rutherglen Muscat.