



**Now I Know My ABCs... of Temecula Valley Wine Grapes**  
***An A-Z of What Shines in Southern California Wine Country***

New Zealand and Sauvignon Blanc. Oregon and Pinot Noir. Napa and Cabernet Sauvignon. Argentina and Malbec. Like bread and butter, all famous wine regions seem to have a famous grape counterpart.

In Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country, there's often a hearty debate about what grape the region should be known for. Its Syrahs have received countless awards. But Temecula Valley Sangiovese is top-scoring as well. And what about the luscious, beautifully floral Viognier that so many wineries are famous for? Or the bright, savory sleeper of the Valley, Cabernet Franc?

This isn't because Temecula Valley winemakers can't make up their minds! This diversity is a result of a Mediterranean climate that is well-suited to grow a wide range of grapes, and, more importantly, a culture among winemakers to experiment with new grape varieties.

Visitors to the region delight in the immense diversity of offerings, as there truly is something for every type of wine enthusiast. From Arneis to Zinfandel and everything in between, let's take a look at some of the key grape players that have put Temecula Valley on the global wine map.

**Arneis** – A little-known grape from Northern Italy, Arneis also shines in Temecula Valley. Here, it expresses itself with notes of peach, apricot and almond, with floral notes and bright acidity. Check out Arneis from [Hart Family Winery](#).

**Barbera** – A versatile, food-friendly grape from Northern Italy as well, this variety shows amazing promise in Temecula Valley. Southern California Barbera offers rich fruit and wonderful structure. Try Barbera from [Europa Village](#).

**Cabernet Franc** – This grape is normally a blending variety in Bordeaux, but we are seeing it more and more as a single varietal, especially in Temecula. [Baily Winery](#) does an impressive vertical tasting of 6-8 vintages of Temecula Valley Cabernet Franc, showing the strength and longevity of this variety.

**Falanghina** – This ancient variety from Campania in Southern Italy is simply magical in the hands of [Cougar Winery](#).

**Grenache** – Often found in blends from France’s Rhone Valley, or throughout Spain, where it is known as Garnacha, Temecula Valley winemakers play with this grape often, either on its own or in blends. Check out Temecula’s [50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Commemorative Wine](#) – a blend of Syrah, Grenache and Mourvedre.

**Mourvedre** – Again, often a blending grape, this variety shows great promise on its own in Temecula Valley, boasting notes of cooked fruit and spice and impressive body. Visit [Wiens Family Cellars](#) for a taste.

**Montepulciano** – Another Italian variety that just sings in Temecula Valley, bursting with fruit, sweet spice and delightful acidity. Robert [Renzoni Vineyards’](#) Winemaker, Olivia Bue, has brought out the best in this grape.

**Petite Sirah** – This grape – known for its intense color, and bold flavors of black fruits, chocolate and spice – may have originated in France, but it was born to be grown in Temecula Valley. [Wilson Creek](#) makes a particularly noteworthy bottling, which also won the 2016 People’s Choice award.

**Pinot Grigio/Gris** – Very few wine regions in the world don’t grow at least some Pinot Grigio, and there is a wide range of different styles of this wine, from light and fruity to complex and ageworthy. In Temecula, the wines are fuller in body, with crisp acidity and ripe fruit notes. For a real treat, and a fun alternative to your everyday Prosecco, try [South Coast Winery’s](#) sparkling Pinot Grigio.

**Roussanne** – This Rhone Valley Grape, often blended with Marsanne and Viognier, can be quite interesting on its own if handled properly. Sip on [Oak Mountain’s](#) Temecula Hills Roussanne for a taste of this variety.

**Sangiovese** – One of Italy’s signature grapes, Sangiovese could very well have been born in Temecula Valley. Most winemakers in the region bottle this versatile variety, in a wide range of styles. Be sure to visit [Robert Renzoni Vineyards](#) for a spectacular lineup.

**Syrah** – Another grape that is emerging as a king of Southern California wine country is Syrah and the climate in Temecula Valley is perfect for it. Try any of [Leoness Cellars’](#) offerings to get a sense of the true potential of this variety.

**Tempranillo** – This Spanish variety does very well in Temecula Valley, both blended and on its own. Try one from [Danza del Sol Winery](#).

**Viognier** – A full-bodied, perfumed variety from Southern France, Viognier is widely found in Temecula Valley, where it finds powerful expression. [Doffo Winery’s](#) Concrete-Fermented Viognier is a must when exploring this variety.

**Zinfandel** – While this grape originated in Croatia, many think of it as the quintessential American variety. In Temecula Valley, it is rich and juicy but the region’s winemakers have shown some restraint in crafting it, preserving bright acidity and structure in most bottlings. [Van Roekel Estate’s](#) Zinfandel from some of the region’s oldest vineyards is a stunning example.

Call us selfish but with so many delicious grape varieties to choose from in Temecula Valley, why should anyone have to choose just one?

To find out more about these and other wineries in Temecula Valley Southern California Wine Country, visit [www.temeculawines.org](http://www.temeculawines.org).