

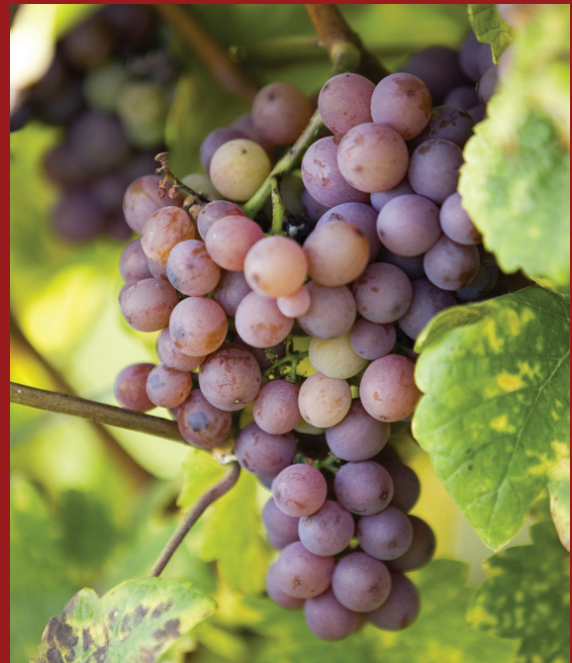
## WINE & SPIRITS - Gewurztraminer

**D**espite its German name, this grape originated in the Italian Tyrol and reaches its peak as a wine grape in Alsace in France. The Traminer grape has been grown in Italy for hundreds of years near the village of Tramin or Termeno. The green Traminer grape mutated to produce a dark pink skinned grape with a distinct lychee – like perfume. This aromatic grape acquired the name Gewurztraminer in Alsace. It is a grape which does not do well in hot climates but is easily damaged by frost in the spring. In hot climates the grapes have too much sugar and not enough acidity to make good wine but in colder conditions the wine can be more balanced and is prized for its fruity odour.

The wine is white or pale yellow and sometimes has a slight sparkle. It is a little sweet and this makes it suitable to drink with fatty or oily foods such as foie gras or smoked salmon. Gewurztraminer is also claimed to be an excellent accompaniment to spicy or Asian cuisine (though for me a beer is preferable with such food.)

Outside Alsace Gewurztraminer are grown in other parts of France as well as in Austria, Italy, Germany and East Europe. New Zealand, Australia, Canada, the USA, Chile and Israel also cultivate these grapes.

There can be no doubt, however, that it is in Alsace that Gewurztraminer is most successful. There it is the second most planted grape variety and the wine character can vary from very sweet to the very dry. The fruity aroma is the only really common factor. Since the grape can be very high in sugar content it is often used to make a dessert wine or is sometimes even infected with the Noble Rot!



For those who enjoy a very aromatic wine Gewurztraminer is well worth trying. It is not too expensive so get the Alsace versions. It is not a wine to keep for a long time. Enjoy it for the summer with strong cheeses, satays or curries or smoked salmon.

**George Leslie**