

MOURVEDRE

History

Mourvèdre has its origins in Spain where it was already recognised in the sixteenth century, identified as Murviedro in the old kingdom of Valence and as Mataro in Catalonia. The variety then spread across Roussillon and eastwards across Southern France. Widely grown, the plantings were greatly reduced after the outbreak of phylloxera in France in the 1860s and are only recently becoming more widespread again.

The variety was brought into Australia in the Busby collection of 1832 from Perpignan (Roussillon) and although not highly rated by Macarthur, it managed to survive.

Characteristics

Vine

The vine is upright and of vigorous growth with medium-sized 3-5 lobed leaves, dark green in color with a downy under surface.

Fruit

The bunches are medium-sized, long, conical and winged. The berries are round, medium-sized, blue-black in color covered with bloom, with thick skins and a somewhat bitter juice.

Wine

The wine possesses good color, is rich and though it may be comparatively neutral on the palate, it is more usually quite astringent when young, high in acid and alcohol, but perfumed and it will soften with age. Its astringency has led to its use as an important blending wine rather than as a varietal wine, and it is used as one of the thirteen varieties accepted in the production of the famous Châteauneuf-du-Pape from the Rhône Valley of Southern France.

In Australia Mourvèdre is used either as a varietal wine or is blended with other varieties commonly used in the wines from the Rhône Valley of France such as Grenache, Shiraz etc. Mourvèdre is occasionally used to produce a vin de liqueur as in South-Western France or in a port style wine in Australia.