



Pinot Blanc

Like the other pinots, there are several synonyms for Pinot blanc. In Germany, it is known as Weisser Burgunder, Clevner, Clävner, Weisser Ruländer, and Weisser Arbst. The most commonly used name in Italy is Pinot Bianco, and in Austria it is Weissburgunder. Beli Pinot, Feherburgundi, and Rouci Bile are synonyms used in Eastern Europe.

Pinot blanc is a mutation of Pinot noir that resulted in white grapes. It made its first appearance in Europe later than Pinot noir and Pinot gris, and it is speculated that Pinot blanc was in the Alsace in the sixteenth century. In the 1980s, most Pinot blanc vineyards in California were discovered to actually be the variety Melon. In other countries, Chardonnay and Chenin blanc were misidentified as Pinot blanc.

Pinot blanc is much easier to grow than Pinot noir. It has a small canopy yet is relatively fruitful, thus cane pruning may not be necessary. On a six-foot vine spacing, it will produce no more than about 12 pounds of fruit per vine. A wider vine spacing would not be used. The clusters are extremely tight—as much if not more so than all of the other members of the Pinot family. In coastal areas, Pinot blanc for still wine will ripen during the first three weeks of September.

Oregon growers have evaluated two clones from Colmar that they refer to as ENTAV 55 (formerly labeled INRA 159) and ENTAV 54 (formerly labeled INRA 161), which make up the plantings there; these are “generic clones” rather than trademarked clones. FPS Pinot blanc 07 is a generic clone, also derived from French 55. Also registered are Pinot blanc FPS 05 and 06, which originated from Rauscedo, Italy. ENTAV-INRA[®] 54 is available commercially and registered at FPS. Unlike Pinot gris, Pinot blanc is planted almost exclusively in cool growing regions.

A white varietal wine is made from Pinot blanc grapes. Pinot blanc has been blended with other varieties to produce sparkling wines.

—*Rhonda J. Smith*

