

# TASTE AND TALK #3 – WORKHORSE VARIETIES

## *What are Workhorse varieties?*



WHAT IS A  
WORKHORSE  
VARIETY?

*Workhorse - unglamorous but hardworking, steady, reliable*

*High yielding*

*Large areas planted but rarely appears on label*

*Some formerly used for fortified wines or distillation*

*Most winelovers have never heard about them*

*Many are on the decline - replaced by “international varieties”*



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## *Airen: Global Rank 4*

*Spanish white variety*

*Until recently covered largest area globally of any variety*

*380,000 ha in 2000, now ~200,000 ha*

*Vineyards are being pulled out and replaced with Tempranillo*

*Can make light bodied, neutral whites*

*Blended with Tempranillo for lighter red wines*

*Used for bulk whites, distillation*

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## *Grenache /Garnacha: Global Rank 8*

*Spanish origin but largest area planted in France*

*216,000 ha in 2000, now ~150,000*

*Long history in Australia, mostly SA*

*High yielding - “Port”, basic reds, Vine pull,  
Old vine classics, GSM*

*Is McLaren Vale GSM the best Low -mid priced option?*

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## *Carignan - Mazuelo*

*From NE Spain, but mostly grown in France*

*Globally 127,000 ha in 2000, 47,000 ha in 2016*

*Main Culprit in 'European wine lake'*

*Carignan Renaissance*

*Can make fine wine from older vines*

*Most Aussie 'Carignan' is actually Bonvedro*

# TASTE AND TALK #3 – WORKHORSE VARIETIES

## *Malbec Cot*

*From Cahors, SW France, now best known in Argentina*

*Globally 26,000 Ha in 2000, 52,000 ha in 2016*

*Long serving workhorse of Argentina*

*Gained attention in export markets as cheap red*

*Now recognised as making superior reds when handled carefully*

*Used in Australia for blends and varietals*

*Popularity dropped away by end of 20th Century*

*Now on the rebound*

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## *Chenin Blanc*

*From the Loire Valley, formerly largely grown in S Africa*

*45,000 ha in 2000, 32,000 ha in 2016*

*Fall mainly in S Africa*

*High yielding in hot irrigated conditions*

*Swan Valley ‘white burgundy’*

*Can make age-worthy whites, dry off dry, sweet*

*Vouvray, Coriole*

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