

What is Riserva Wine?

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Perhaps you've seen certain Italian wines labeled riserva before. But what exactly is Riserva wine and why is there so much hype around it?

In Italy, we use the word Riserva to indicate a superior vino. The term is most often seen when talking about notable wines of Toscana, like [Chianti Classico](#) [2] or [Brunello di Montalcino](#) [3], as well as Piemonte's famous [Barolo](#) [4] and [Barbaresco](#) [5] wines. While outside of Italy the word "reserve" can mean many different things depending on where the wine is made, [Italian wine law](#) [6] stipulates that Riserva wines are aged for a longer period of time than wines that are not labeled riserva. Riserva wines also tend to use higher quality grapes.

Below are some common standards for some of Italy's most popular Riserva wines:



Amarone della Valpolicella Riserva: Aged for at least 4 years

Barbaresco Riserva: Aged for at least 4 years

Barolo Riserva: Aged for at least 5 years

Brunello di Montalcino Riserva: Aged for at least 5 years

Chianti Classico Riserva: Aged for at least 27 months

Vino Nobile di Montepulciano: Aged for at least 3 years

WHY DO RISERVA WINES COST MORE?

Apart from the fact that Riserva wines require higher-quality ingredients and meticulous attention to detail, it's really the aging process that makes this wine more expensive. After all, the wine producer must store riserva wines in their cellars for a much longer period of time. Trust us: it's well worth it and there's nothing quite like the taste of a well-aged Riserva!

WHEN SHOULD YOU DRINK RISERVA WINE?

The best of the best, Riserva wines are of great standing and prestige. Traditionally, Italian wines labeled "Riserva" are made with riper grapes and undergo longer periods of aging than non-riserva wines. This often results in a flavor that many consider better. Indeed, they're the kind of bottles you "reserve" only for special gatherings! These bottles also make great gifts for wine lovers.

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[1] <http://ftp.iitaly.org/files/barolo-red-wine-pour.jpg>

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