

## Franken

10 Sep 2008 by Jancis Robinson

**In a nutshell:** Earthy whites.

**Main grapes:** Silvaner, Riesling, Müller-Thurgau, Scheurebe (white); Spätburgunder (red).

Franken, occasionally known as Franconia in English, is the most easterly of the many wine regions based on the Rhine or its tributaries, producing earthy, dry white wines that are quite different from the German norm and generally go well with food, but tend to be expensive because of local demand. Because winters can be so severe this far east, frost is a real danger every year and the size of the harvest varies enormously. For the consumer, Franken wines are distinguished by the flat green flask-shaped bottle, or Bocksbeutel, in which they are sold (impossible to fit into a wine rack). Silvaner is the star vine variety of Franken. Like Riesling, it has benefited from the rising temperatures of the last decade to reach full ripeness and, when planted on the best sites, can be as concentrated and alcoholic as the best wines from the Wachau in Austria. Rieslaner, the local crossing of Silvaner with Riesling, can produce impressive late-harvest wines too. Würzburg is the capital of the region and Würzburger Stein is one of the most famous vineyards, along with the wonderfully named Eschendorfer Lump just north of the capital. Rudolf Fürst and Fürst Löwenstein are producing pretty good Spätburger in the more westerly Mainviereck area.

**Some favourite producers:** Bürgerspital, Castell, Juliußpital, Horst Sauer and Wirsching.