COURT OF MASTER SOMMELIERS Americas

INTRODUCTORY SOMMELIER

GRAPE VARIETY PROFILES

Grape Variety Profiles

A Guide for Students New to Wine

These grape variety profiles are designed to help students who are new to wine by offering a clear guide to:

- Learn the names of different grape varieties.
- Understand where important grape varieties are grown around the world.
- Connect grape varieties to specific wine regions and learn about the growing conditions in those areas.
- Explore winemaking techniques used for particular grape varieties and regions.
- Recognize sensory characteristics commonly linked to different grape varieties, such as typical aromas, flavors, and structural elements like sweetness, acidity, tannins, and alcohol.

These profiles describe the key traits of each grape variety. For example, knowing that Sauvignon Blanc often has citrusy or grassy flavors helps students build their wine-tasting vocabulary.

These profiles also show the connection between a grape and its region of origin. For instance, understanding that Sangiovese is the main grape in Tuscany, or that Nebbiolo is primarily grown in Piedmont, helps students learn where certain grapes thrive and what types of wines these regions produce.

Finally, these profiles provide a framework for wine tasting. By learning the common traits of each grape variety, students can taste wine more confidently and better identify the characteristics in the glass.

CHARDONNAY

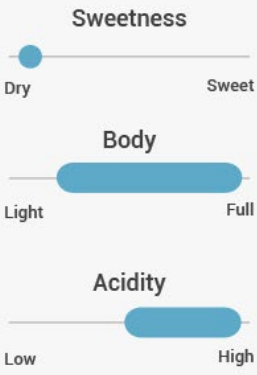
Chardonnay

Styles

Possible Winemaking Steps

Growing Climates

Spectrum of Expression



Top Regions

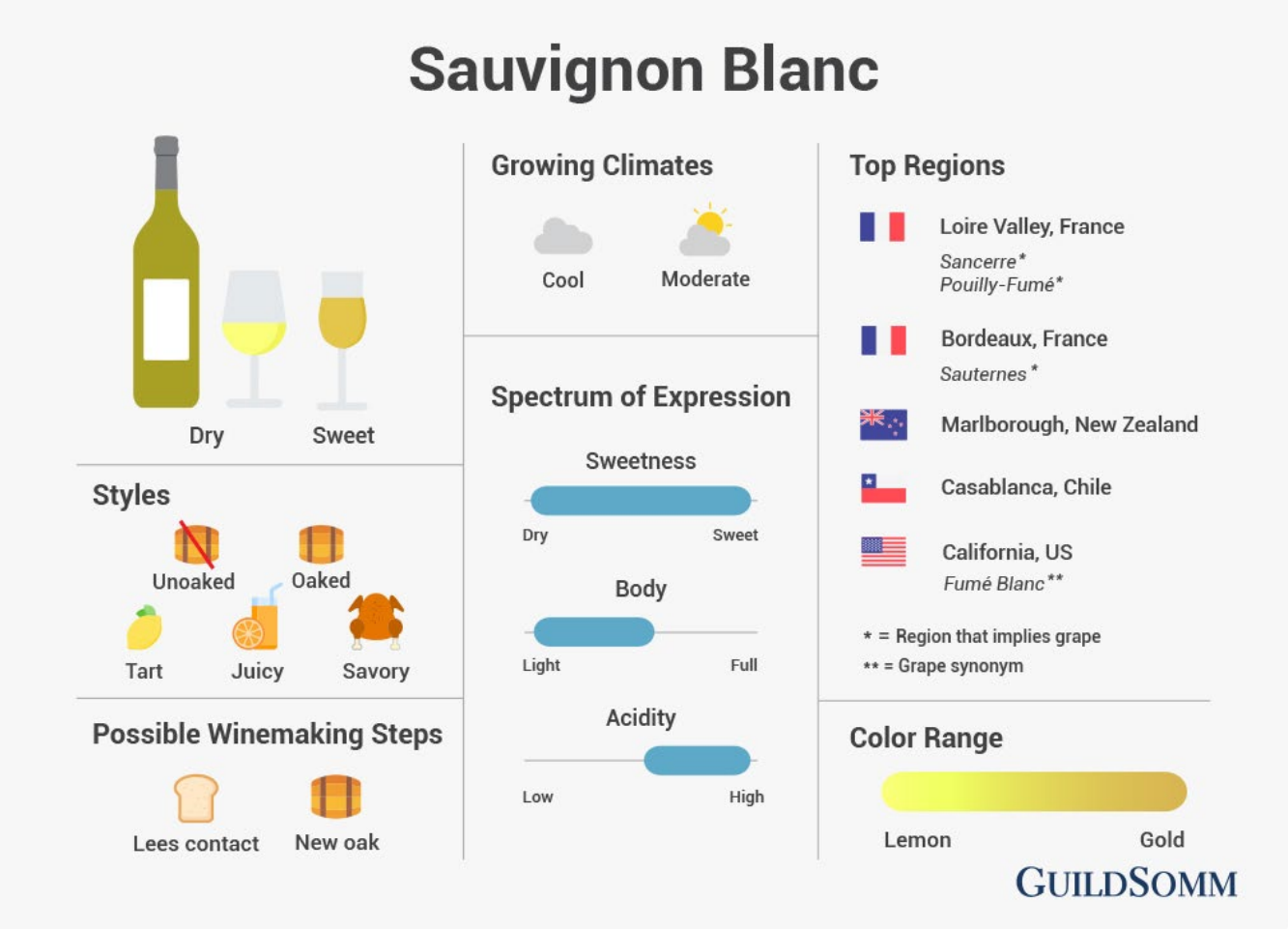
- Burgundy*, France
- Champagne*, France
  Blanc de Blancs **
- California, US
- Oregon, US
- Victoria, Australia

* = Region that implies grape
** = Grape synonym

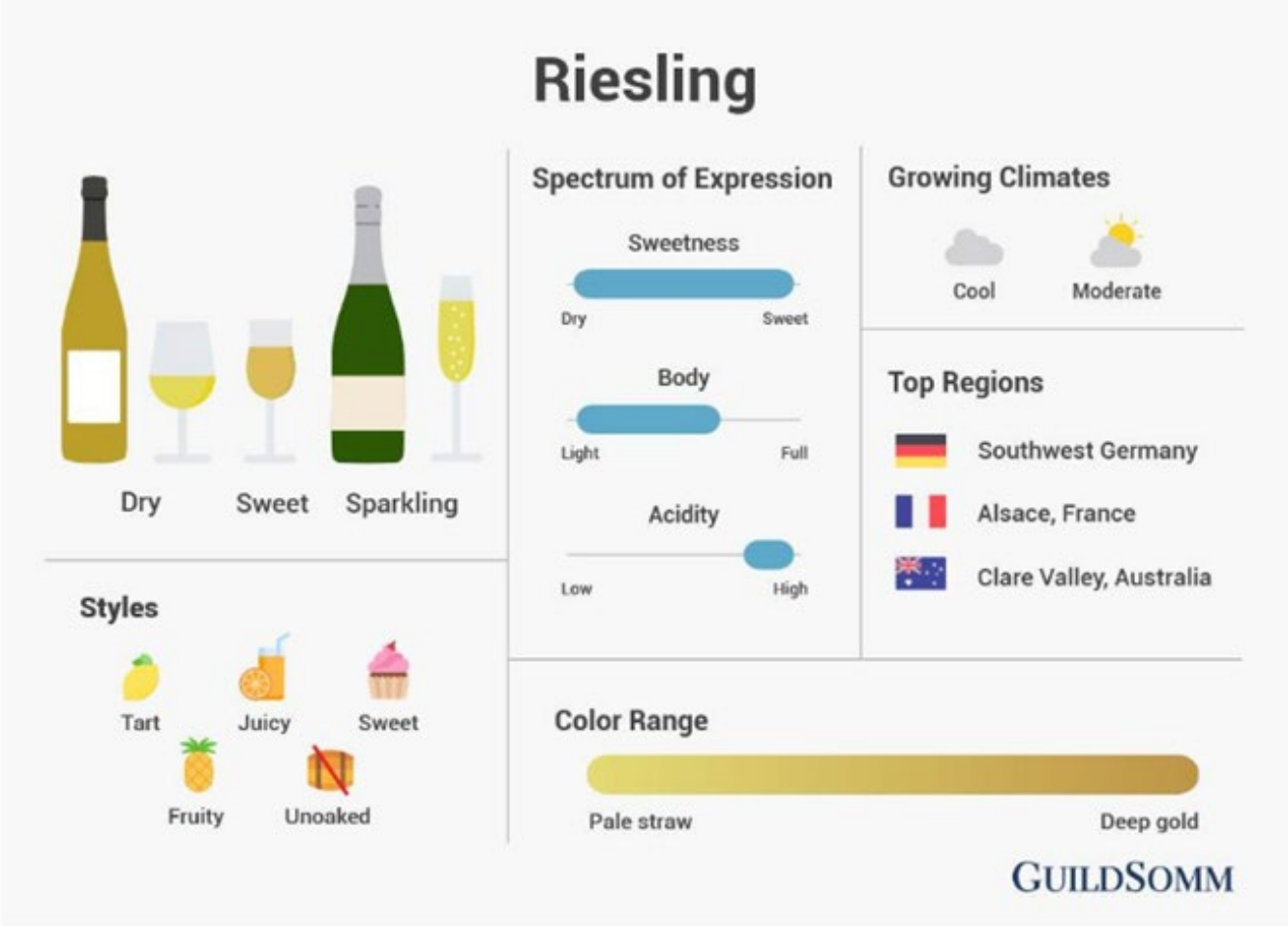
Color Range

GUILDSOMM

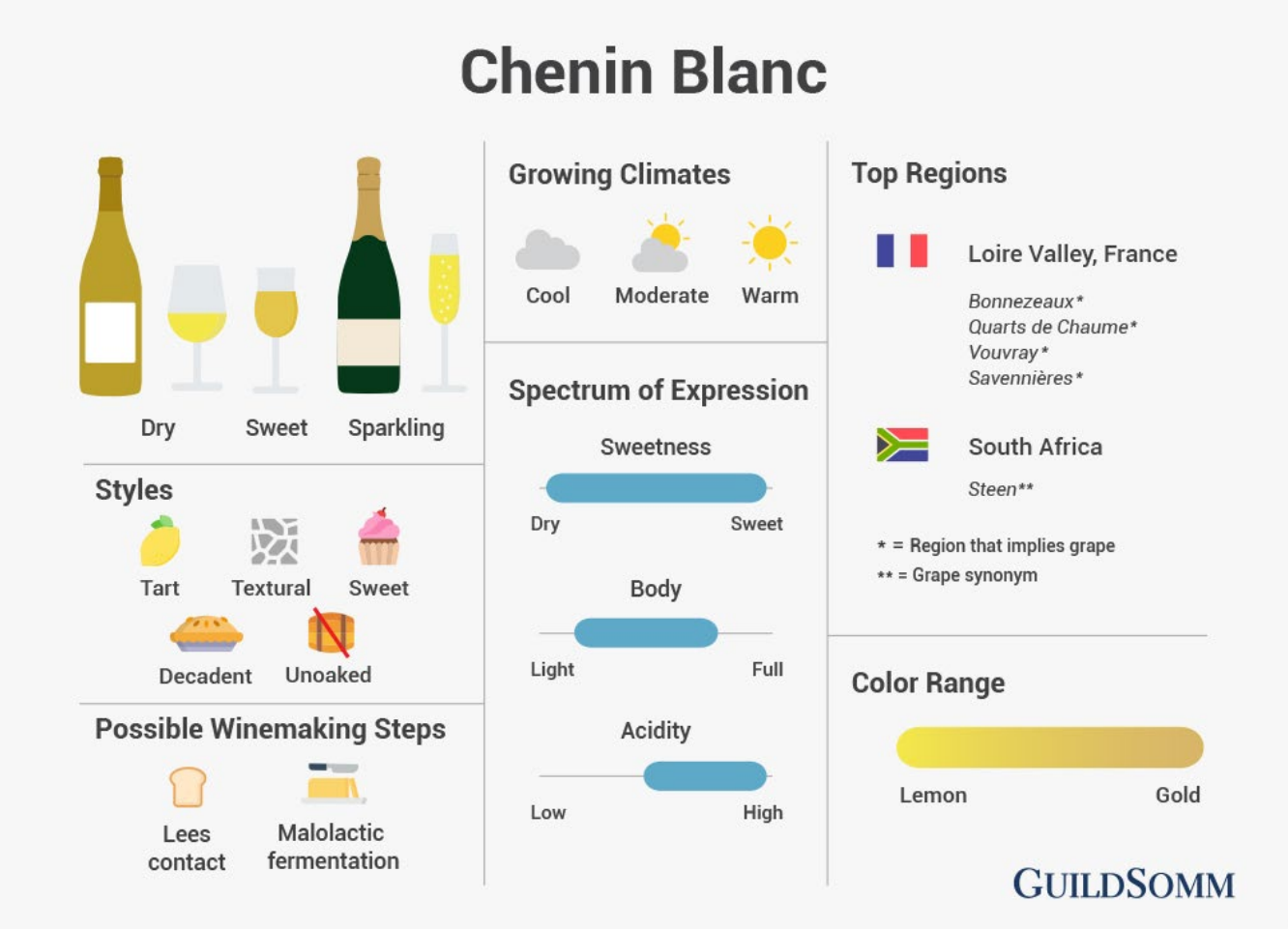
SAUVIGNON BLANC



RIESLING


Riesling
Dry
Sweet
Sparkling
Spectrum of Expression
Sweetness
Dry
Sweet
Body
Light
Full
Acidity
Low
High
Growing Climates
Cool
Moderate
Top Regions
Southwest Germany
Alsace, France
Clare Valley, Australia
Styles
Tart
Juicy
Sweet
Fruity
Unoaked
Color Range
Pale straw
Deep gold
GUILDSOMM

CHENIN BLANC



PINOT NOIR

Pinot Noir

Burgundy bottle and glass

Spectrum of Expression

Tannin: Low — High

Body: Light — Full

Acidity: Low — High

Growing Climates

Cool | Moderate | Warm

Top Regions

- Burgundy*, France
- California, US
- Oregon, US
- New Zealand

* = Region that implies grape

Styles

Fruity | Tart | Juicy | Savory | Textural

Possible Winemaking Steps

Whole cluster | Neutral oak | New oak

Color Range

Pale ruby — Deep ruby

GUILDSOMM

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Cabernet Sauvignon

Bordeaux bottle and glass

Styles

Fruity

Oaked

Tannic

Savory

Decadent

Possible Winemaking Steps

Destemming

Blending

New oak

Growing Climates

Moderate Warm Hot

Spectrum of Expression

Tannin: Low — High

Body: Light — Full

Acidity: Low — High

Top Regions

- Bordeaux,* France
- California, US
- Washington, US
- Chile
- Australia

* = Region that implies grape

Color Range

Deep ruby Ruby Purple Dark purple

GUILDSOMM

MERLOT

Merlot

Bordeaux bottle and glass

Styles

Fruity, Oaked, Ripe, Textural, Decadent

Spectrum of Expression

Tannin: Low — High

Body: Light — Full

Acidity: Low — High

Growing Climates

Moderate, Warm

Top Regions

Bordeaux*, France

California, US

Chile

* = Region that implies grape

Possible Winemaking Steps

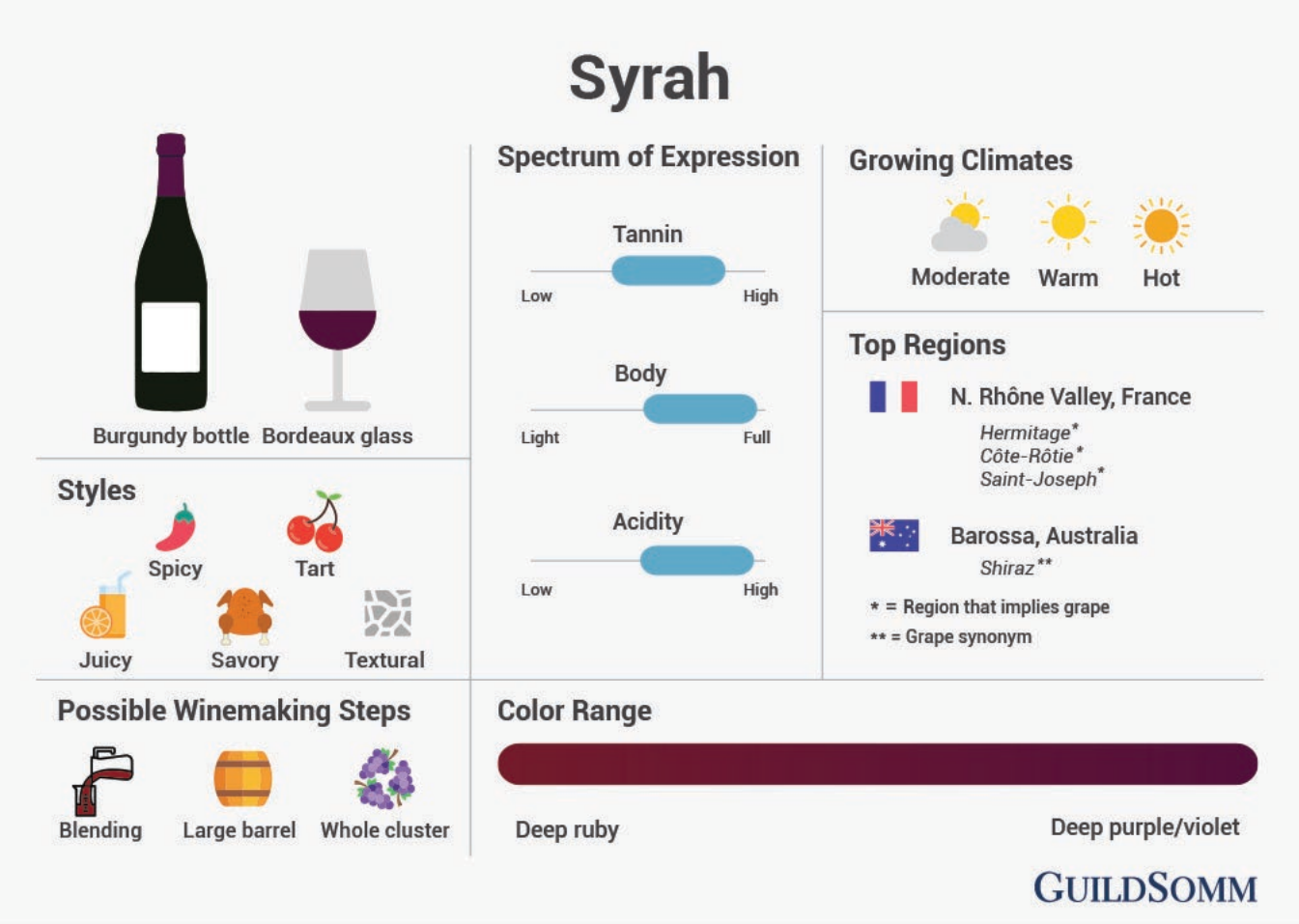
Destemming, Blending, New oak

Color Range

Medium ruby — Deep ruby — Purple

GUILDSOMM

SYRAH


Syrah
Burgundy bottle
Bordeaux glass
Styles
Spicy
Tart
Juicy
Savory
Textural
Spectrum of Expression
Tannin
Low
High
Body
Light
Full
Acidity
Low
High
Growing Climates
Moderate
Warm
Hot
Top Regions
N. Rhône Valley, France
Hermitage*
Côte-Rôtie*
Saint-Joseph*
Barossa, Australia
Shiraz**
* = Region that implies grape
** = Grape synonym
Possible Winemaking Steps
Blending
Large barrel
Whole cluster
Color Range
Deep ruby
Deep purple/violet
GUILDSOMM

GRENACHE

Grenache

Burgundy bottle and glass

Styles

Fruity

Unoaked

Ripe

Spicy

Decadent

Spectrum of Expression

Tannin: Low — High

Body: Light — Full

Acidity: Low — High

Growing Climates

Warm

Hot

Top Regions

S. Rhône Valley, France

Spain

*Garnacha Tinta***
*Garnatxa***

Australia

** = Grape synonym

Possible Winemaking Steps

Large barrel

Blending

Whole cluster

Color Range

Medium ruby — Deep ruby

GUILDSOMM

NEBBIOLO

Nebbiolo

Burgundy bottle and glass

Styles

Tart

Textural

Tannic

Savory

Juicy

Spectrum of Expression

Tannin: Low — High

Body: Light — Full

Acidity: Low — High

Growing Climates

Moderate

Warm

Top Regions

Piedmont, Italy
*Barolo**
*Barbaresco**

Lombardy, Italy
*Valtellina**
*Chiavennasca***

* = Region that implies grape
** = Grape synonym

Possible Winemaking Steps

Large barrel

Extended skin maceration

Color Range

Medium ruby — Deep ruby — Garnet

GUILDSOMM

SANGIOVESE

Sangiovese

Bordeaux bottle and glass

Styles

Oaked

Tart

Juicy

Savory

Tannic

Possible Winemaking Steps

Large barrel

Neutral oak

Blending

Spectrum of Expression

Tannin: Low — High

Body: Light — Full

Acidity: Low — High

Growing Climates

Warm

Hot

Top Regions

Tuscany, Italy

*Chianti**

*Brunello di Montalcino***

* = Region that implies grape

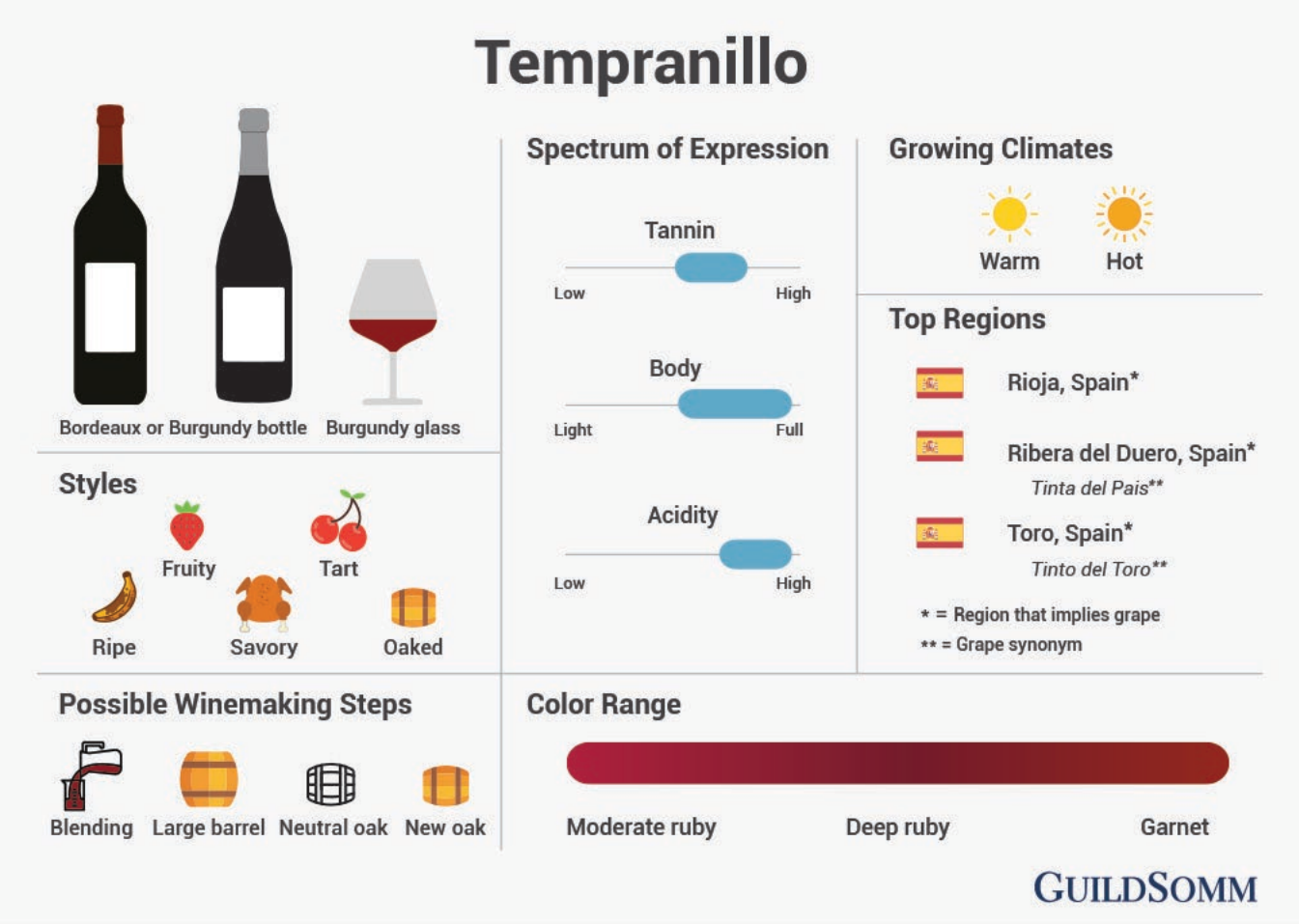
** = Grape synonym

Color Range

Pale ruby — Deep ruby — Garnet

GUILDSOMM

TEMPRANILLO



Grape Variety Profiles Courtesy of GuildSomm