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# 5 Endangered Varieties to Try

Expand your palate and help these varieties from going the way of the dodo.

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There are 1,368 known wine grape varieties. But 80 percent of the world's wine production comes from 20. Of the remaining *vitis vinifera*, hundreds are at risk of going the way of the dodo.

For instance, 155 Mediterranean endangered varieties are planted on less than 24 acres, according to the French Wine Mosaic Project, one of several institutions whose sole purpose is saving grapes from the abyss.

Many grapes on the lengthy endangered list are at risk for good reason: They make lousy wine. But several are not just drinkable, but damn delicious and deserve to be tasted. Below are several rarities worth trying. Pour them and you'll not only expand your palate, you'll help bring these varieties back from the brink.

**Abouriou:** A high-tannin, low-acid red grape, it's planted on 800 acres in southern France and a few acres in California.

**Producer:** Old World Winery (Russian River Valley)

**Abrustine:** So at-risk, researchers are unclear how many actual vines exist of this native Tuscan red grape.

**Producer:** Podere Santa Felicita (Tuscany)

**Altesse:** A white grape found in France's mountainous Savoie region.

**Producer:** Domaine Nicolas Gonin (Savoie)

**Charbono:** Grown on less than 250 acres in California, the grape is being revived by several notable producers. Charbono is the same grape as Argentine Bonarda and French Corbeau.

**Producers:** August Briggs, Bonny Doon, Pacific Star, Robert Foley and Villa Helena

**Erbaluce:** This ancient variety from Piedmont was first written about in 1606, and it's grown on 780 acres. It can be made in a number of styles, but seek it out as a passito-style dessert wine.

**Producer:** Luigi Ferrando (Piedmont)

