

@ THE WINERY

MARSANNE

This is the next white variety in our ongoing coverage of the main wine varieties.

Marsanne and Roussanne, two of the white grape varieties from the northern Rhône Valley, are among the world's rarest. However Marsanne is becoming increasingly popular again in France, its country of origin, and also in Australia, Switzerland and the U.S..

Marsanne and Roussanne are recorded as being brought to Australia in 1832, along with Shiraz, by James Busby, the father of Australian winegrowing. Tahbilk (Victoria) have popularised Marsanne in Australia and they have vines dating back to 1927, some of the oldest Marsanne vines in the world.

Marsanne is a vigorous and productive variety with a spreading habit of growth. Bunches are of medium size, with small berries which become brownish gold when ripe.

Roussanne is even rarer than Marsanne, especially in Australia. Roussanne is named after the russet colour of its grapes (*roux* is the French name for a russet colour). It's more often blended with Marsanne than made into a varietal wine, adding acidity and perfume.

THE WINES

When co-fermented or blended with Roussanne, Marsanne produces wonderfully flavoursome wines, complex and satisfying, with the Marsanne providing richness and mouthfeel and the Roussanne giving freshness and lift. They typically have intense floral aromas with peach, tropical and citrus flavours.

Marsanne's are enjoyable as young wines but they also age superbly. It is unusual for white wines to improve with bottle age, but this is one of the exceptions. After about five years in the bottle the wines develop wonderful bouquets reminiscent of honeysuckle and baked apple.

As well as Marsanne-Roussanne blends, traditionally sometimes a little Viognier is also included, creating a Marsanne-Roussanne-Viognier.

FOOD PAIRINGS

Younger Marsanne's with their crisp acidity can be enjoyed with seafood and antipasto, or lighter white meats such as poached chicken. Aged Marsanne can be paired with roast chicken, veal or seafood dishes with a heavier sauce.

Warwick Adams

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WINERY
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