

@ THE WINERY

VIIGNIER

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

The Viognier white grape variety (pronounced as *vee-on-yay*) was rescued from near extinction just a few decades ago and is now one of the hottest varieties going around. Legend has it that the variety was introduced, along with Shiraz, to the Rhône Valley during the Roman occupation. After two millennia of barbarian invasions, dark ages, wars and the ravages of time just a few hectares of Viognier were left in a small corner of the Rhône around Condrieu by the 1960's. But the word got out and thanks to modern viticultural techniques Viognier is now widely planted in Languedoc and Ardeche in France as well as in Italy, California and Australia.

The traditional wine style made from this variety is rich and sensual - in a word voluptuous. The ripening process of the grapes is regarded as idiosyncratic in Viognier. The fruit flavours seem to arrive in a rush at the end of ripening, so patience and a strong nerve is required to avoid picking too early. Therefore it's quite likely that there will be strong variation from vintage to vintage.

THE WINES

Viognier wines can have powerful, rich, and complex aromas, often like ripe apricots and peaches mixed with orange blossoms or acacia. With as distinctive and

sweet an aroma-flavour profile, Viognier is nevertheless usually made in a dry style.

Both Chardonnay and Viognier share tropical fruit flavors and a creamy mouthfeel, however Viognier has a much more distinctive fruit character. Late-ripened Viognier also has a typically deep golden colour, as well as rich and intense flavour.

Not everyone appreciates the traditional heavy, rich style of Viognier though, so in Australia some winemakers (including us) are starting to produce a lighter, earlier-picked, fresher style. We call this a 'Viognier Nouveau' and find it hits the spot with wine drinkers.

Viognier is also increasingly popular as a white partner co-fermented with Shiraz, creating a Shiraz-Viognier. It is also often blended with Marsanne or Roussanne.

FOOD PAIRINGS

Viognier wines are robust enough to be paired with quite aromatic or mildly spiced dishes, and lighter styles go well with seafood.

Dishes such as oriental stir-frys and even curry, especially Thai-style with coconut milk, may be accompanied and complemented by Viognier. Also fruit salsas, atop grilled fish or chicken, can be miraculously tasty with Viognier.

Warwick Adams

belgravepark

WINERY
FREE TASTINGS
MEDAL WINNING WINES

Princes Highway, Cobargo
3km south towards Bega
Open Weekends, 11am - 5pm
T 6493 6377 www.belgravepark.com