

LEARN A BIT MORE ABOUT

CHARDONNAY



Probably the world's most globetrotting grape – and yet half the drinking populace affect to despise it! Are you an ABC-er? Someone who says 'Anything But Chardonnay dahling!'? So many people are and yet for most people, the problems with Chardonnay are nothing to do with the wine itself – they're either problems of timing or oak. Chardonnay is a drink for grown-ups. It's got more complexity and depth than other white wines and if it's one of the first wines you try – especially if it's a wooded version - then it can seem too creamy, fat and cloying and you walk away thinking you hate the grape. Time to walk back.....

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

One of the reasons that Chardonnay is popular the world over is that it is very adaptable and versatile. Pretty much every country in the world which makes wine has Chardonnay growing somewhere and it makes very different wines according to where it's planted. Cooler climates such as Durbanville produce much fresher, leaner styles whilst inland regions such as Stellenbosch, Franschhoek and Paarl make slightly richer and rounder versions.

WHAT DOES IT TASTE LIKE?

As grapes ripen, the sugar levels increase and the acidity decreases – think of the difference between eating a sour,

unripe peach and a ripened, sunkissed version. In cooler climates, grapes struggle to get enough sun and here Chardonnay has lots of citrus flavours – lemons, limes & naartjie. As temperatures warm up, so does the fruit profile of the wine – moving through stone fruit (apricots, peaches, nectarines) into full-on tropical flavours of melons, pineapples and bananas. And, of course, all these flavours can be enhanced (or spoiled, depending on your opinion!) by creamy, spicy, buttery, vanilla-y oak. Balance is the key to any wooded wine - one in which the fruit, the acid, the alcohol and the oak flavours all hang around nicely together in your mouth with no single component dominating. Chances are, if you think you hate Chardonnay, it's probably the spicy, creamy, buttery-ness of oak you hate, and if that's the case, go for an unwooded version, preferably from cooler climes.



CHARDONNAY



WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW?

Chardonnay is the great white grape of Burgundy and makes some of the most expensive white wines in the world – think Meursault, Puligny-Montrachet and Pouilly-Fuisse. But it's also the main white grape in Champagne and here in SA, forms the basis of nearly all the finest MCC's, adding floral notes, fruitiness and longevity to most of the top fizzes worldwide.

OPTIMAL SERVING TEMPERATURE:

7-12°C

* according to wine.co.za



WHAT SHOULD WE EAT WITH IT?

How long is a piece of string? Chardonnay comes in lots of different forms and therefore is a brilliant partner for lots of different types of food. Lighter, unwooded versions are great with seafood and salads and are an excellent choice for big parties or weddings, keeping most wine-drinkers happy and going with most food. Heavier, wooded versions have enough chops to stand up to most types of meat (even chops!) and they often prove excellent partners for lightly-spicy foods as well. Just keep an eye on alcohol levels though – high abv's and heat are never a good combination.



How does the flavour develop?

VINEYARD INFLUENCE:

Apple, Apricot, Lemon, Grapefruit, Melon, Peach, Pineapple

WINE MAKING INFLUENCE:

Almond, Butter, Butterscotch, Cashew, Nutty, Charred, Coconut, Smokey, Vanilla, Toast

BOTTLE AGING INFLUENCE:

Fig, Honey, Limestone, Chalk