

SAUVIGNON BLANC



Ah - everyone's favourite white grape! Retailers and restaurateurs will tell you that almost half of all white wines sold are Sauvignon so why is it so popular? It's really down to a combination of two factors – firstly, its fruit profile is all about crisp, clean, fresh flavours which is pretty much what everyone is looking for in a white wine and secondly, you can generally rely on having no oak, which makes it a sure bet for those who don't like wood with their wine.

WHERE DOES IT COME FROM?

Sauvignon grows best in cool-climates, so in South Africa, you can expect to find the best vineyards close to the coast where the fresh sea breezes blow across the vineyards and slow down ripening – think Durbanville or way down at the tip of Africa near Cape Agulhas. Other good regions for Sauvignon involve altitude – the higher you go, the cooler you get, the happier Sauvignon becomes.

OPTIMAL SERVING TEMPERATURE:

7-12°C

* according to wine.co.za



WHAT DOES IT TASTE LIKE?

The longer the grapes take to ripen, the more delicious aromatics you will find in the wine – expect lots of 'green' notes such as grass, peas, hay and asparagus as well as lemons and limes and in warmer areas, plenty of tropical fruits such as guavas, papayas and litchis. Sauvignon has a natural high acidity (another reason why it works best in cooler areas because in hotter regions, this acidity is lower and the wine can become flabby and dull) and it's this which gives it its wonderful crispness and freshness in the mouth. As the wine gets older, the acidity becomes less and the flavours take on more 'sheepy' characteristics of wet wool and lanolin – if that doesn't sound terribly attractive, make sure you drink your Sauvignons before they reach this stage!



SAUVIGNON BLANC



WHAT ELSE SHOULD WE KNOW?

Sauvignon Blanc makes two very well-known wines in the Loire Valley of Northern France – Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé - both of them racy, zippy and full of zesty, green flavours. Here in South Africa, you sometimes see wines labelled as Blanc Fumé– but in these cases, the Fumé bit indicates time spend in an oak barrel, unlike in France. Blanc Fumés are somewhat of a rarity in SA because everyone loves those fresh, lipsmacking citrusy notes and don't want to confuse them with creamy, nutty oak. One of the positive effects of putting a Sauvignon into an oak barrel, however, is that it can calm the acidity down somewhat and make it a much better partner for food.

WHAT SHOULD WE EAT WITH IT?

When a Sauvignon is young, crisp, fresh and sappy, it can be quite tricky to pair with food, many people opting to use it as an apéritif instead. Sauvignon is quite a light-bodied wine so needs to go with lighter dishes, working best with fish (particularly oily fish where the crisp acidity can cut through the fatty richness) or chicken. Salads can work very well with Sauvignon, the vinegar of the dressings softening the freshness of the wine into a harmonious mix. The classic match for Sauvignon, however, is goats' cheese – the acidity of the wine cleaning up the somewhat cloying texture in your mouth, whilst at the same time matching the tang of the cheese itself.



How does the flavour develop?

VINEYARD INFLUENCE:

Fresh Cut Grass, Gooseberries, Green Apple, Green Bean, Green Capsicum, Grapefruit Peel, Herbaceous Hints, Lemon, Melon, Passionfruit, Tomato Bush, Tropical Fruit

WINE MAKING INFLUENCE:

Butterscotch, Charred, Coconut, Sawdust, Smokey, Steely Toast, Vanilla

BOTTLE AGING INFLUENCE:

Asparagus, Canned Peas, Honey