

July 25, 2009

The Sommelier Says....

Hello and welcome to the newsletter for <http://www.wine-sommelier.com/>

White Wines for the Summer time.

As the local temperatures are reaching the triple digits, I find myself reaching for wines in my white wine fridge. This time of year my heavy red wines usually go untouched.

So what type of white wine do you need for this time of year? This year I am being drawn away from the common whites and look for something a little different.

So crossing off the list are Chardonnay, Riesling, Pinot Grigio, and Sauvignon Blanc, I am not looking at Viognier either, which is well produced in our local area. No the varietals that I am trying now are off of most wine drinkers radar.

Here I have list a few that I have tried, with some notes and a brief history of the varietals, origin, aroma, and producer.

Arneis (Piedmont, Italy)--light-to medium-bodied, viscous, with floral aromas and suggestions of pears and almonds; this grape is becoming popular in California (Seghesio) and Oregon.

Fiano (Campania, Italy)--medium-bodied, with aromas of pears and hazelnuts; its origins traced back to Roman Age; makes long-lived wines. Best white wine in Campania; leading example: Fiano di Avellino. Some grown in Northern California (Seghesio).

Grüner Veltliner (Austria)--dry, lively, spicy, minerally, light- to medium-bodied; Austria's most popular white wine now very hot in U.S (Hersch)

Marsanne (Rhône Valley, France)--deeply colored, rich, nutty, honeyed; dry, full-bodied. In the Rhône Valley, a part of white Hermitage, but also in California (Zaca Mesa), Australia, and Switzerland (as Ermitage Blanc).

Roussanne (Rhône Valley, France)--floral, delicate, herbal, high acidity; an important component of white Hermitage and other Rhône whites; increasingly popular as a varietal wine in California (again Zaca Mesa), Washington, and Australia.

Sémillon (Bordeaux, France)--viscous, low acid, aromas of lanolin; great blending partner with Sauvignon Blanc in Bordeaux (Bordeaux Blanc and Sauternes--where it's the dominant variety). Made in California, Washington, and very popular in Australia--on its own and with Sauvignon Blanc. (Columbia Crest)

Verdelho, a.k.a. Godello (Portugal)--full-bodied, limey, aromatic; now popular in Australia as a dry white, but its history is mainly in Portugal's Douro Valley. Also used in Madeira, and in Loire Valley, France. Possibly originated in Sicily. (Marquis Philips)

Go out this evening and shop at your favorite wine store looking for some of these varietals. The nice thing about most of these wines is that you can get most of them for under \$20 a bottle!

If there are some white wines that you have tried that are not too common, drop me a note with your tasting notes and be eligible to win a bottle of wine from my personal wine cellar! Entries must be received by August 10, 2009.

Organic Wines... just what does that mean?

Organic food is becoming trendy, with grocery sales of organic foods growing at a rate of nearly 20 percent per year for the past seven years.

But organic wine hasn't gained nearly as much traction in the marketplace.

Personally, I'm an eager advocate of organic foods, but organic and biodynamic wines haven't made a similar case with me - or, apparently, with many other wine-geek consumers, perhaps because the artisanal wines we favor don't make heavy use of chemical fertilizers and pesticides anyway. In extensive tastings, I can't say that I find much difference between organic wines and their non-organic competitors in the glass.

Still, organic wine sales are forecast to increase, pulled along by the organic food trend.

Coincidentally, new rules governing organic wine labeling in the U.S. took effect last month. The rule changes were intended to "clarify" the contents of organic labels for consumers. Clarify? Let's see ...

First, wines that have been labeled "Made with Organic Ingredients" now will have to spell out whether there are non-organic ingredients in the wine as well, using one of the following specific statements:

- * Made with organic and non-organic grapes.
- * Made with organic {variety} grapes and non-organic (variety) grapes.

* Made with _% organic grapes and _% non-organic grapes.

* Made with _% organic (variety) grapes and _% non-organic [variety] grapes.

In addition to the "Organic Ingredients Statement," bottles of wine declared organic must also carry a separate statement revealing the amount of organic ingredients in the bottle by percentage.

What's more, even if a wine is made from 100 percent organic grapes, it may not be certified organic if it contains added sulfites.

Further, if the winery has not elected to go through the U.S. Department of Agriculture's certification process for organic producers, it may not be certified organic, even if the contents in fact are 100 percent organic. (However, in another burst of clarity impairment, the regulations do permit such wines to be labeled, "Ingredients: Organic Grapes.")

Everything all clear now?

The rules, established among the Department of Agriculture's Agricultural Marketing Service and Treasury's Alcohol and Tobacco Tax and Trade Bureau, took effect June 2.

The Tax and Trade Bureau offers a technical summary of the new rules on ["Alcohol Beverages Labeled with Organic Claims"](#) here.

Paso Robles Wine Tour- August 8/9

I will be heading up to Paso Robles on August 8/9 to visit some of the fine wineries in that area. The focus of August 8th will be Justin Winery where they are having their Annual Wine Society Gala. Enjoy wine tasting, food from Restaurante Tacos Tenexpa, and live music from Roughhouse. Casual dress. Taste all current releases plus new releases of 2007 Reserve wines – including SAVANT, Reserve Tempranillo and Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon.

\$15/person for Wine Society members, \$25/person for Guests- Please let me know if you plan on attending so I can purchase your tickets.

I will be staying at The Holiday Inn Express, 2455 Riverside Ave, Paso Robles, CA 93446 (805) 238-6500.

The current itinerary has us leaving Simi Valley at 7am on Saturday morning, stopping in Buellton for Breakfast, arriving at Justin by 11:30 am. Sunday we will visit up to 5 wineries. Transportation to and from the wineries might be arranged

if the interest is great enough in this tour. You are responsible for your own transportation to and from Paso Robles.

Contact me today if you are interested in joining me on this trip!
tim@wine-sommelier.com

Rancho Ventavo Wine Classes!

Address: 741 South "A" Street, Oxnard CA 93030

Telephone (805) 483-8084.

I am teaching a series of Wine Appreciation Classes at Rancho Ventavo Cellars. Contact Rancho Ventavo to sign up and additional details.

Looking ahead

*- *July 26 A Taste of Camarillo*

<http://www.meadowlarkserviceleague.com/>

*- *August 5- Judgment of Paris-Redux- Rancho Ventavo Cellars*

*- *August 8-9 Paso Robles Wine Tour*

*- *August 12- The Art of Wine Tasting- Rancho Ventavo Cellars*

*- *August 18- Wine 101 – Herzog Winery*

*- *August 19- Wine Regions of California- Rancho Ventavo Cellars*

*- *October 30- Nov 1- Wine tour to Willamette Valley Oregon (Date change)*

Cheers-

Tim

If you would like to be removed from this list, please reply to me at tim@wine-sommelier.com and request removal from this list.

If you know someone that wants this list, please have him or her send me an email requesting to be included too!