



# Chardonnay

The Versatile Grape

# Chardonnay History

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- Originating in the Burgundy region, has been grown in France for at least 1,200 years.
- Chardonnay is believed to have been named after a village of the same name in the French Mâconnais area in southern Burgundy. It comes from the Latin *cardonaccum*, meaning “place full of thistles.”
- Chardonnay is a genetic cross between Pinot Noir and Gouais Blanc, an obscure grape variety believed to have originated in Croatia, and transported to France by the Romans.
- Chardonnay is probably made into more different styles of wine than any other grape.

# A White Wine That Breaks the Rules of White Wine

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## Most White Wine...

- Contains residual sugar for a hint of sweetness.
- Malolactic fermentation is avoided to bring out fruit flavor and freshness.
- Aged in stainless steel tanks.

## Chardonnay...

- Usually fermented bone dry.
- Sometimes put through malolactic fermentation to reduce acidity and enhance buttery qualities.
- Often aged in oak barrels.

## Fun Facts & Trivia

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- Chardonnay is believed to be the second biggest white grape grown world-wide, when measured by acreage. In first place is 'Airén', a fairly obscure white grape grown extensively in central Spain. Airén is grown without irrigation in a very dry region, so vines are spaced far apart, and yields are very low. If measured by tonnage or bottles produced, Chardonnay would be the leader by far.
- Chardonnay has been grown in Italy for a long time (although often confused with Pinot Blanc). In 2000, it was Italy's 4<sup>th</sup> most widely planted white grape variety!
- Gouais Blanc, one of the parents of Chardonnay, is sometimes referred to as the "Casanova" of grape varieties. Although rarely grown now, it has been identified as a parent of Aligote, Auxerrois, Bachet, Chardonnay, Franc Noir, Gamay Noir, Melon, Romorantin and Sacy.
- Chardonnay is even grown in England!

# Serving Suggestions

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- Temperature is an important consideration with Chardonnay. In general, it's not recommended to serve fuller bodied wines ice cold, as it will emphasize any bitter elements and mute the bouquet. 55° to 58°F is a good range.
- The brighter acidity of cooler climate Chardonnays pairs well with fatty foods, such as cream sauces, nutty cheeses, and pork dishes.
- For something different, try a barrel-aged Chardonnay with a steak! Although it breaks the red wine with red meat rule, you may be surprised how well it works.

# Champagne Tasting - Doug

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- Korbel California Champagne Chardonnay (non-vintage)
- Méthode Champenoise (as explained at the April meeting by Rob Fowler)
- “Dosage” 1% by weight (residual sweetness); 12% alcohol
- Bought locally from MGM Liquors, about \$13/bottle
- Since it is made exclusively from Chardonnay, this is a “Blanc de Blancs”
- Larger pours to give you something to sip on, during the video!

## Slide 6

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**SK1** We'll start the Jancis Robinson movie after this.  
Steve Kroll, 11/7/2015

# Chablis Tasting - Doug

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- Chablis is technically part of Burgundy in Northern France, but Chablis wines are usually quite different from the white Burgundy wines of the Cote d'Or.
- Only Chardonnay is grown in Chablis.
- Chablis is about the most northerly wine area in France – pushing the envelope in terms of ripening Chardonnay reliably, so the wines tend to be lighter, dry and crisp.
- Chablis developed as a wine producing region in part because it is upstream from Paris (following the Yonne and the Seine). Before railroads were built, it was much easier to ship wine to Paris from Chablis than from any other region in France.

# Chablis Tasting - Doug

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- There are 4 quality levels of Chablis:
  - Petit Chablis is grown outside the boundaries of Chablis proper, but nearby. This designation was added in 1944, due to increasing demand for Chablis wine. These are often fairly pleasant, but usually inexpensive.
  - Chablis is grown inside the boundaries designated in 1938.
  - Premier Cru wines, about 40 vineyards, are considered of higher quality.
  - Grand Cru comprises 7 vineyards, all on a single hillside along the river Serein (on the south-facing slope) near the town of Chablis. These are considered the highest quality.
- We are tasting Chateau de Maligny Chablis, 2013 (quality level #2)
- Purchased locally from Haskell's, \$20/bottle
- Alcohol 12.5%

## Unoaked Chardonnay Tasting - Steve

### 2014 Kim Crawford Unoaked Chardonnay

#### East Coast, New Zealand

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- A crisp, medium-bodied, dry Chardonnay with flavors of pineapple and melon.
- Pairs well with seafood, chicken, and “fusion” foods.
- Kim Crawford sold his company – and name – to Vincor in 2006. Interestingly, he still makes wine but is unable to market it due to licensing constraints resulting from the sale.
- The grapes for this wine are selected from vineyards in Marlborough and Hawke’s Bay regions, located on the east coast of the South and North Islands respectively.

## Unoaked Chardonnay Tasting - Steve 2014 Kim Crawford Unoaked Chardonnay East Coast, New Zealand

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- Much like their Sauvignon Blancs, New Zealand Chardonnay has only really come into its own in the last couple of decades.
- Although this particular wine doesn't see any oak, it should be noted that New Zealand is one of the few countries that uses a good percentage of American oak for aging its Chardonnay wines. This is driven primarily by consumer tastes, where the vanilla and coconut notes of American oak are felt to be a good compliment to the New Zealand style.
- Available at most metro area Total Wine locations for \$12.00.

## Oaked Chardonnay Tasting - Steve

### 2014 Cloud Break Barrel Fermented Chardonnay California

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- Cloud Break Wines is part of the Vintage Wine Estates group, which also owns Clos Pegase, BR Cohn, and Windsor Vineyards, among others.
- Made in more of a California style, this wine exhibits flavors of pineapple, tropical fruit, and toasted oak. Malolactic fermentation reduces acidity and gives a buttery quality. Alcohol is on the lower end for Chardonnay at 12.5%.
- This wine consistently shows up year after year in “best value” lists.
- Available for around \$8.00 at most Total Wine locations around the Metro area.

## Kendall-Jackson Late Harvest Chardonnay - Doug

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- Finally – time for dessert!
- From Monterey, California – harvested in November 2007
- Since a late harvest wine depends on the weather, it's only made in certain years – probably years with a good crop of grapes, and a long, dry picking season.
- Mail-ordered from International Wine Shop website
- About \$18 per half-bottle, plus shipping