

@ THE WINERY

SAUVIGNON BLANC

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

Sauvignon Blanc originated in the Gironde (Bordeaux) area of southwest France during the seventeenth century.

Sauvignon Blanc is actually one of the parents of Cabernet Sauvignon (whose other parent, Cabernet Franc, is a red grape).

Historically the Bordeaux region, especially the Sauternes area, produces Sauvignon Blanc wines that are rich and sweet - often dessert wines (the original botrytised 'stickies'). On the other hand Sauvignon Blanc's from the Sancerre region tend to be dry and steely.

Sauvignon Blanc was first planted in Australia in 1832 but was a fairly minor, unfashionable variety until recently. It is also widely grown in California (where it's often called 'Fume Blanc'), Chile, South Africa and, of course, New Zealand.

In the 1990's, Sauvignon Blanc wines from the cold maritime regions of the south island of New Zealand (primarily the Marlborough region) became popular on the wine market, and have firmly put the Kiwi's on the world map for this variety. Unfortunately there is a downside - growth has now outstripped demand and there is currently a glut of cheap New Zealand Sauvies.

THE WINES

The flavour spectrum of Sauvignon Blanc is quite diverse. Upon a backbone of herbaceousness lie tropical fruit, melon, passionfruit and gooseberry. The distinctive Sauvignon characters of capsicum, mown grass and asparagus are caused by compounds called *Methoxy-pyrazines*.

The best Sauvignon Blanc's come from cool to cold regions, where varietal expression is at its strongest. On the other hand the Australian warmer climate regions typically produce Sauvignon Blanc with more tropical characters.

For the best New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc's, variation in soil types in the one vineyard can also create a wide diversity of flavours - with the heavier soils producing more herbaceous wines from grapes that ripen late and vines in stonier soils ripening earlier and imparting lusher flavours.

Sauvignon Blanc's flavour profile complements that of Semillon and these two varieties are often blended together.

FOOD PAIRINGS

A very versatile wine that will pair well with many different foods. For example chicken, fish, oysters, pasta (especially with creamy or seafood sauces), asparagus, salads and vegetarian dishes.

Warwick Adams

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