

Title:

Famous Chardonnay Back on Top

Word Count:

459

Summary:

Chardonnay is a thousand year old small village in Mâconnais in the southern portion of France's burgundy region.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

Chardonnay is a thousand year old small village in Mâconnais in the southern portion of France's burgundy region. The famous wine Chardonnay most likely originated here and was then spread throughout France by the monks. The earliest recorded reference to Chardonnay occurs in 1330 when Cistercian monks built stonewalls around their 'Clos de Vougeot' vineyard exclusively planted to Chardonnay grapes. There is another hypothesis that points towards Lebanon when it comes to the origins of Chardonnay, but with no written references. Another direction points to an Austrian vine very similar to Chardonnay, called Morillon. The name Morillon has been used during the middle Ages in the region of Burgundy and was an old name for Chardonnay in the region of Chablis.

Murray Tyrrell from Australia changed the course of history for Chardonnay by bringing the HVD vineyard in 1982. Chardonnay is the most widely planted variety in Australia and also in NZ. There is more Chardonnay than Cabernet Sauvignon or Shiraz.

Lately Chardonnay has become a common girls name and has had a terrible press starting with the ABC (Anything But Chardonnay) movement. Critics are making case of Riesling and other people are finding Sauvignon Blanc, Chenin Blanc or Viognier worth drinking. But Chardonnay consistently makes better wines in a wider range of climates than any other white variety. It is also responsible for the majority of the world's finest whites.

Chardonnay is a vigorous, heavy cropping variety with medium sized bunches. Bunches have tightly packed berries forming a single cluster not like loosely spaced Shiraz bunches. A ripe Chardonnay berry is gold yellow in colour with plenty of juice. Berries are small, fragile, thin-skinned and require care

during harvest to avoid oxidization. Chardonnay is very sensitive to winemaking practices. Cool climate Chardonnay produces an abundance of fruit flavours. The warmer climate Chardonnays may have less of the fruits but develop wonderful honey, butterscotch, buttery and nutty oily flavours that really fill the mouth. The trend of fermenting Chardonnay in oak barrels and then storing it in new oak can kill the fruit characters. You know there's too much oak when all you get is vanilla and cinnamon and no fresh fruit.

The new worldwide winemakers have increased the freshness and acidity by sourcing grapes from cooler climates such as Marlborough (New Zealand), Russian River (California), Yarra Valley and Mornington Peninsula (Australia), Constantia and Walker Bay (South Africa), Casablanca and Leyda (Chile), and Agrelo and the Uco Valley (Argentina). This doesn't mean that Burgundy is forgotten. Whites from Chablis, the Côte Chalonnaise and the Mâconnais are very good value.

Chardonnay is back on top and as Tim Atkin, in an Observer's article advises "He had more exciting Chardonnays in the past 12 months than in the previous 12 years."