

Grapes of the World - Part 2

Trebbiano - This grape's biggest claim to fame is that it is easy to grow. It is responsible for more wine produced than any other grape due to its high-yield plantings. It is grown in France, Italy, and Australia. Trebbiano is most often used to produce table wines. In France, Trebbiano is referred to as Ugni Blanc where it is used as a base for Cognac.

Columbard - Produced heavily in California, Columbard is often blended into generic white wines. With proper treatment, Colombard will produce crisp whites with a pleasant minerality and citrus fruits. This grape is also grown in France, South Africa, and Australia.

Folle Blanche - This grape is sparsely grown in California, Spain and Uruguay. It produces wines that are tart and thin. It is also known as Picpoule, Gros Plant, and Enrageat blanc. Folle Branche is used mostly for table wines.

Malvasia - This variety of grape produces wines that have aromas of pears and spice along with fresh, fruity flavors. This grape is produced widely around the world. Unless used to produce dessert wines, wines produced from this type of grape do not age well and should be consumed quickly.

Pinot Blanc - This grape produces a light, dry, and pleasant wine. Grown primarily in Alsace (France), California, Italy, Germany, and Australia, wines produced from this grape are often referred to as "the poor man's Chardonnay". Pinot Blanc is used for still white wines and sparkling wines. It is most commonly blended with Auxerrois. This combination typically yields a spicy, smoky character.

Aurora Blanc - A French-American hybrid grape, this is one of the most widely planted hybrids in the eastern United States. This grape is usually made into a white table wine.

Seyval Blanc - Considered by many to be the best of the French-American hybrids, Seyval Blanc is grown widely in the eastern and midwestern United States. It is also grown extensively in England and the Finger Lakes region of New York State. This grape is famous for its resistance to cold and produces wines that have citrus fruit flavors and aromas.

Vidal Blanc - Table wines produced from Vidal Blanc have an elegant mix of honey, fruits (with notes of grapefruit and pineapple), wildflowers, and peach syrup. Vidal Blanc has found much fame in the dessert and ice wines of Canada and the Great Lakes.

Verdicchio - This grape is grown primarily in Italy and produces a strong flavored, medium bodied wine with a slightly bitter finish. Blending is quite common with Verdicchio wines.

Viognier - The home of Viognier is in Condrieu and Château Grillet where it is used to produce small amounts of expensive but tasty wine. This is a delicate grape that has low and unpredictable yields and should be picked only when fully ripe. When picked too early, Viognier fails to develop its full extent of aromas. When picked late, the grape produces wine that is oily and lacks perfume. The Viognier grape is experiencing resurgence in popularity and is being planted in California as well as other parts of the world. This grape produces medium body wines with peach and apricot aromas. Viognier is at its best when young.

About the Author

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