



## VIOGNIER WINES - SUMMER SIPPING

Tuesday, June 15, 2010

6 PM

Faculty Club, Univ of Toronto, 41 Willcocks Street, Toronto

Members' Fee: \$48 Guests/Non-Members Fee: \$59

Summer usually brings thoughts of which white wines to pair with picnics, light lunches, salads and all the lighter fare of hot weather. Traditionally thoughts turn to Riesling, Sauvignon blanc, Chardonnay and Pinot Gris. There is, however, a grape lurking on store shelves that is arguably the most versatile of all the white varietals and one which offers flavour profiles that are unique, complex and nuanced by their origin of production. The grape is *Viognier* (*vee-on-nee-ay*). The origin of the name Viognier is obscure. The most common namesake is the French city of Vienne, which was a major Roman outpost. Another legend has it drawing its name from the Roman pronunciation of the *via Gehennae*, meaning the "road to Hell" likely because of the difficulty in growing this grape which is prone to powdery mildew and low yields.

Viognier is generally associated with the Condrieu Appellation in Northern Rhone, just south of Cote Rotie and north of St. Joseph and Cornas. Typical of this area are granite soils on south facing slopes which enjoy hot summers but cooler days in early spring and late autumn. The Condrieu AOC comprises approximately 500 acres. Viognier is the only permitted grape varietal within Condrieu. Generally yields are very low and the entire 500 acres produces only about 30,000 cases of wine – about one bottle of wine per vine! Vinification methods may vary in their use of stainless tanks and cool fermentation, malo-lactic fermentation and use of oak. Since the flavours of Viognier are often fresh and delicate, the use of too much oak is inappropriate. Typical descriptors are: Floral - orange blossoms, acacia, violet, honey; Flavour - apricot, mango pineapple.

Viognier is now grown in all of the major wine growing areas of the new world, even in S. Ontario (in small quantities). Our selection will include some of the best examples from these areas and give us a chance to compare styles and the effects of terroir and vinification with the classic benchmarks from two very different producers in Condrieu. “. . . I believe Viognier has unique characteristics for terroir differentiating appellations, or vineyards within an appellation. Somehow aromatics speak (sing!) more clearly than any other natural component of wine, and their voice can tell us a lot about where they hail from. From Virginia to British Columbia, Michigan to Texas, Viognier sings in a wide range of voices.” Roger Dial (winegrower/maker/ negotiant/writer).

The tasting will feature Viogniers from 5 different regions and includes one reserve. Light appetizers will be served with the wines.

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### REGISTER / BUY TICKETS

Register/buy tickets online at <http://www.onlineregistrations.ca/tvcevent6/> You must register online and then can pay by credit card or by cheque. **ALL ticket sales/reservations are final whether paid by credit card or cheque.** Cheques must be received by Friday, June 11. The cheque-payment option will be disabled at midnight Tues, June 8 after which only credit card sales will be accepted until midnight Sunday June 13 or earlier if the event sells out. You will be sent an email confirmation after completing your registration. If you tried to register but did not receive your confirmation, please contact [torontovintners@onlineregistrations.ca](mailto:torontovintners@onlineregistrations.ca). Processing may take up to a minute or two. Be careful not to register twice.



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### **2005 Condrieu- Guigal (France) \$40 US**

A blend of oak- and steel- fermented lots to help preserve some of the Viognier's freshness. The 2005 is a success, featuring scents of honeysuckle and apricot and a touch of toast. It's reasonably rich on the palate, coating the mouth with ripe, peachy flavors, finishing with credible length. "...shows classic flavors of white peach, citrus, litchi and fresh ginger, feeling focused and complete in its mouthfilling aromas..." (92 Wine Spectator)

### **2007 Condrieu- Christophe Pichon (France) \$50**

"Hang onto your hats because this is the Viognier grapes greatest form of expression and Pichon is a master-craftsman. As dreamy and wistful as any white wine, this is a massive treat and you will be hypnotised by the haunting apricot and peach aromas and honeyed, yet dry, invigorating finish" (Quintessentially Wine).

### **2006 Viognier -Edward Sellers (California) \$38**

With the cool temperatures and perfect ripening conditions of 2007, the grapes ripened slowly which meant lower sugars at harvest (and lower alcohols in the bottle). The night-time temperature swing insured that the attractive honeyed floral aromatics of the grape were punctuated by a subtle yet refreshing acidity, reminiscent of ripe citrus fruits. After harvest, the juice was barrel fermented, using only native yeasts and with 12% new French Oak. This lends the wine a creamy, vanilla-like undertone, while accentuating its soft quince and jasmine aromas. The wine is subtle and elegant, showing bright fruit in the mouth with a long, smooth finish hinting at apricots and mango.

### **2006 Treana Libert School Viognier/Marsanne (California) \$31**

This white Rhone blend displays varietal characteristics of Marsanne and Viognier; vibrant floral aromas of citrus blossom and jasmine are followed by elegant flavors of ripe stone fruit, hints of pear, pineapple and honey overtones. A wine of excellent balance and complexity, the Treana White will age beautifully over the next decade.

### **2007 Yalumba "Virgilius"Viognier (Australia) \$51**

Yalumba has been at the forefront with viognier for over a decade and their flagship The Virgilius Viognier is world class. Bright green/gold, this complex and fruit-driven wine (barrel-fermented but not in new oak) has aromas of honey and apricot kernel and a palate that is ripe, viscous and long. It's restrained - unusual for this variety - and beautifully balanced.

### **2007 Petaluma Viognier (Australia) \$35**

Crisp, lean Viognier with subtle honey, spice and rose petal flavours. Tight, taut wine in a rather austere and un-Viognier-like style. Perhaps time will expose qualities that are not immediately apparent.

### **2008 Creekside Estate, Reserver Viognier (Canada - Niagara) \$28**

*Gold medal winner, Cuvee 2010; Best limited Edition White winner, Cuvee 2010.* Barrel fermented in old oak, with a small percentage of stainless steel, from free-run juice. Loads of peach/violet essence, full bodied, generous alcohol, long finish with a touch of heat. Well-proportioned, with sufficient acidity to keep it all together. Nice fruit quality. (John Szabo, Wine Align Ontario Wine Report 2009).

**Mystery wine:** The cool climate, rocky volcanic soil and high altitude are proving ideal for this classic northern Rhone Valley variety. Fermentation of one third of the wine was in stainless steel and two thirds were in French oak, yielding a wine with generous fruit, good body and satisfying complexity.