

Explore the world of Wines with Campbell's

Viognier the Grape

Viognier seemed literally an endangered variety only a few years ago, but seems to be recovering worldwide in both popularity and acreage. Less than 35 acres remained planted in all of France, its homeland, in the late 1960s. Its newest realm, California, has 2,001 acres as of 2002 (although a considerable portion is not yet mature enough to bear a commercial crop) and there are also relatively new plantings in Australia and Brazil, as well as other U.S. plantings in Colorado, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, and Washington.

The major drawback of the Viognier grape is that it is a very shy producer and somewhat difficult to grow. Although drought tolerant, it is easily infected with powdery mildew in damp conditions or humid climates. Like many other varieties, Viognier must be harvested at its peak of maturity in order to display its unique aroma and flavor character. The grape's tendency to develop high sugar but low acid can result in wines with neutral, merely vinous flavors and high alcohol. These cultivation problems and producer desires to capitalize on the grape's somewhat rarity combine to make many Viognier wines relatively expensive.

Viognier is the only grape used for the Northern Rhône appellations *Condrieu* and *Château-Grillet* (one of France's smallest *appellation contrôlée*, with less than ten acres and only one owner). Viognier is also sometimes used to add fragrance and to soften and lighten the syrah in Côte Rotie. Plantings of Viognier in France have expanded in recent years from the Rhône (1830 acres), to the Languedoc (3440 ac.) to smaller plantings in Roussillon (212 ac.) and Provence (272 ac.).

Probably the main attraction of Viognier is its potentially powerful, rich, and complex aroma that often seems like overripe apricots mixed with orange blossoms or acacia. With as distinctive and sweet an aroma-flavor profile as Gewürztraminer, Viognier is nevertheless usually made in a dry style and seems to appeal more to the typical Chardonnay drinker. The distinctive Viognier perfume holds up even when blended with a large portion of other grapes. The fruit usually has very deep color, but is somewhat low in acidity. As California wineries experiment with Viognier-Chardonnays, Viognier-Chenin Blancs, and Viognier-Colombards, this may be the grape's ultimate destiny, as a blender.

Both Chardonnay and Viognier share tropical fruit flavors and a creamy mouth feel. Even with little or no wood aging, Viognier can be as full-bodied as an oaky Chardonnay, but has much more distinctive fruit character. It also has a typically deep golden color, as well as rich and intense flavor.



Viognier Smell and/or Flavor Elements	
Varietal Aromas/Flavors:	Processing Bouquets/Flavors:
<u>Floral:</u> orange blossom, acacia, violet, honey	<u>Malolactic:</u> butter, cream
<u>Fruit:</u> apricot, mango, pineapple, guava, kiwi, tangerine	<u>Oak (light):</u> vanilla, sweet wood
<u>Spice:</u> anise, mint	<u>Oak (heavy):</u> oak, smoke, toast
<u>Herbal:</u> mown hay, tobacco	

Viognier alcohol easily gets out-of-hand, so some vintners leave a touch of residual sugar to mask the heat. The combination of heady aromas and sweet-hot flavors may be overbearing to some palates. Even for those who favor Viognier's brash personality, a little can go a long way and a single glass may satiate one's wine thirst. There are also occasional late-harvest and dessert versions made that can be as headily-intriguing as the finest Sauternes.

Because the prime appeal of Viognier is its fresh and striking aroma, it is a wine that should be consumed young in most instances. The exception is Château Grillet, where the grapes are harvested early and the wine kept in oak for several months prior to bottling; this wine has a reputation for aging up to two decades.

As to food matches, Viognier works well with dishes that might normally call for Gewürztraminer. Spicy dishes, such as spicy oriental stir-fry's and even curry, especially Thai-style which is made with coconut milk, may be accompanied and complemented by Viognier. Also fruit salsas, atop grilled fish or chicken, can be miraculously tasty with Viognier.¹

Notes:

The exact origin of the Viognier grape is unknown. Viognier is presumed to be an ancient grape, possibly originating in Dalmatia (present day Croatia) and then brought to Rhône by the Romans. One legend has it that the Roman emperor Probus brought the vines to the Rhone valley in 281 AD. The other has the vines packed with Syrah vines on a ship navigating the Rhone River on its way to Beaujolais when it was captured at Condrieu by a local group of outlaws known as *culs de piaux*.

There are also plantings of Viognier in Canada, both in British Columbia and Ontario, South America (Argentina and Chile) and Australia

In 2004, DNA profiling conducted at the University of California, Davis showed the grape to be closely related to the Piedmont grape Freisa and to be a genetic cousin of Nebbiolo.

Synonyms include: Galopine, Viogne, Vionnier.

¹ http://www.winepros.org/wine101/grape_profiles/viognier.htm

Santa Julia Viognier

CSPC: 612317 Price: \$12.95*

Founded in the early 1990s, Santa Julia is one of the emblematic Argentine wine trade marks, in the domestic as well as the international markets.

Santa Julia is a clear example of the combination of the quality and diversity of Mendocinian soils, resulting in modern wines.

Among its diverse range of grape varieties we find the classic Malbec, Chardonnay or Cabernet Sauvignon, as well as other rather unconventional varieties in Argentina such as Viognier, Pinot Grigio or Tempranillo.

Created in honor of the only daughter of José Zuccardi, Santa Julia represents our commitment to achieve the highest of quality standards; developing sustainable policies that contribute to environmental care while being useful to the community we live in.

Grape Composition: 100% Viognier.

Origin: Santa Rosa vineyard, Mendoza, Argentina.

Harvest Date: Hand-picked grapes during the last two weeks of March.

Vinification: Skin maceration and fermentation with selected yeasts.

Residual Sugar: 6.00 g/l

TASTING NOTES

Colour: A greenish yellow of medium intensity with silver gleams.

Aroma: Very varietal character, fine, intense and complex. Notes of tropical fruits combined with flowers and ripe fruits: roses, peaches, green apples, pears and bananas.

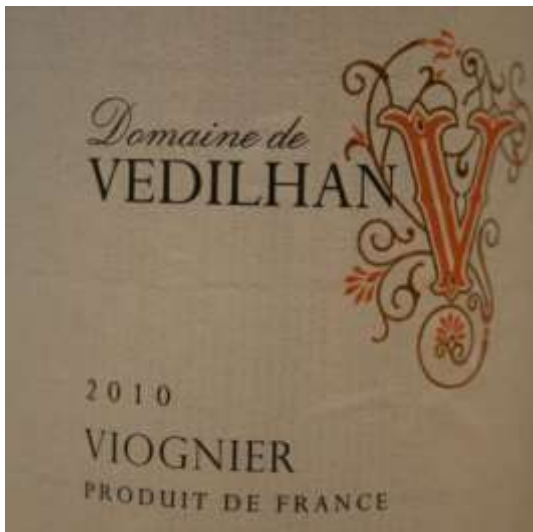
Flavour: Rounded, balanced, fresh and wide in the mid palate. Touches of citrus – orange peel. A long and complete finish.



Domaine De Vedihan Viognier

CSPC: 162081 Price: \$13.95*

Domaine de Vedilhan (pronounced 'Domaine de Ved-ee-ohn') is the estate of the Fayet family based in the village of Moussan close to Narbonne. The property is quite unique in that there is a small brook running around the outskirts which provides natural irrigation to give much needed water. This gives the wines their freshness and appeal; keeping the vines cool in a very hot climate. 50% of the production from this Domaine is used for Boutinot wines. Since 1999 our winemakers have been working closely with the Fayets on all aspects of the production, from when to harvest to the exact blend or style of wines. Terroir is a combination of limestone, sand and sea shale meaning the vines are trained to 'dig deep' for their nutrients. The plots on the



slopes are more gravelly or "cailloutis" and reserved for the reds. We also sometimes find small pieces of sea shells in the soil. The 40 year old vines are managed using very traditional methods & lutte raisonnée, whereby growers actively try not to use any chemicals or unnatural processes in their farming – respecting nature as much as they can.

Country of Origin: France

Region of Origin: Languedoc

Grapes: Viognier 100%

Tasting Note: The nose suggests a rich, round wine with super ripe peaches, hints of honey and pineapple developing into a palate of matching flavours. The wine is smooth and weighty, quite mouth filling.

Suitable For: Vegetarians

Food: Delicious with Thai or fusion inspired dishes and also chicken or pork cooked in creamy or fruity sauces.

Producer Details

The Oc, or 'Pays d'Oc' as you'll see it on most labels, refers to the Languedoc-Roussillon region of southern France, known by the French as 'Le Midi'. Geographically the Oc covers an incredibly broad swathe of vineyards from the Rhône delta in the middle of southern France, arcing all the way round to the Spanish border on her Mediterranean seaboard. Planted here are both traditional grape varieties such as Grenache Gris (which makes very fine rosé) and Grenache Noir; as well as the 'cépages améliorateurs' (varieties introduced in the last twenty to thirty years) such as Syrah and Merlot for reds, Viognier and Sauvignon Blanc for whites. Eric Monnin, Boutinot's winemaker responsible for the Languedoc, is constantly on the look-out for producers who have hidden gems, visiting domains, seeking out new parcels as well as counselling winemakers before the harvest on for example, softening harsh tannins in reds or retaining acidity and expressing aromatics in whites. Then once the grapes have been picked, vinified and the wines barely finished, he tastes these 'brut de cuve' wines intensively and repeatedly over the next six months in collaboration with Samantha Bailey and Kim Tidy to select and blend the styles we seek and decide on their maturation, optimum bottling month and release date to the market.

La Frenz Viognier

CSPC: 714600 Price: \$30.95*

BEST SMALL WINERY at Riverside

Just announced, LA FRENZ was awarded the top trophy for "Best Small Winery Of The Year" at the 2013 Riverside International Wine Competition in California. This is a tremendous result, netting 6 gold and 4 best of class awards.

2012 Viognier: Gold, Best of Class

We are located on the beautiful Naramata Bench in the heart of the Okanagan Valley. At LA FRENZ, we believe the quality in the bottle begins in the vineyard. Cutting edge and meticulous vineyard practices are used in combination with varieties tailored to the unique soils and micro climates of our vineyard sites to produce the vibrant and intense grape characters found only in the Okanagan Valley. The potential of the resulting fruit, using experience and careful stewardship throughout the vinification process, is maintained and enhanced to create exceptional wines that truly reflect the grape variety and vineyard site.

Probyn-Eastman Vineyard

This grape has fast become very popular in North America. It is an intriguing variety that is reluctant to show its best unless fully ripened. For this reason, good Viognier shows the richness and warmth of higher ripeness and resulting alcohol. Our wine shows the full medley of intriguing tropical fruits overlaid with hints of orange blossom. The palate is rich, ripe, and lingering with just a touch of sweetness.



Thomas George Estates Viognier Catie's Corner Vineyard - Russian River CSPC: 738278 Price: \$31.95*

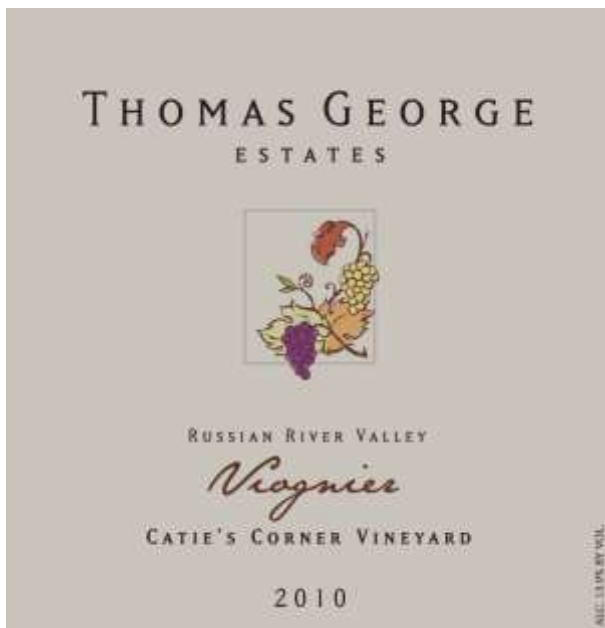
Production: 210 cases

Cooperage: 100% Stainless Steel

About The Wine: This 2010 vineyard designate Viognier comes from Saralee and Richard Kunde's Catie's Corner Vineyard in the Russian River Valley. This vineyard is clone 1 Viognier and trained on a quadrilateral trellis system. We harvested the fruit on Oct. 4th at 24.1 degrees

brix...the fruity characteristics were at their peak while the berries just began to amber. The clusters were hand harvested and pressed whole to tank, the juice was settled at 42 degrees F, then racked two days later. The juice was fermented and aged in tank and malolactic conversion was inhibited. Tank lees stirring was performed once a month for four months.

Tasting Notes: This classic wine comes from our coolest Viognier source. Aromas of Jasmine, green tea and white peach mingle with Zen-like viscosity. Floral notes of white flower and lilacs add to the depth of the nose. This shows a rich and refreshing quality like peaches and cream but finishes with a weighty, albeit, delicate and lingering finish. This is California Viognier at its finest.



K Vintners Viognier

CSPC: 732567 Price: \$32.95*

Located at the base of the Blue Mountains in Walla Walla (Washington State), Charles Smith opened his first winery, K Vintners, in December of 2001. The first release, 1999 K Syrah from Walla Walla Valley, initiated the style of winemaking that Charles continues today: small lots of single vineyard Syrahs and field blends of Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Grenache, Tempranillo and Viognier, all of which are hand-picked, foot-stomped, fermented with naturally occurring yeasts and basket pressed.



He loves to drink wine! Charles Smith, proprietor and winemaker, comes to Walla Walla after 11 years managing rock bands in Scandinavia. Originally from northern California, he has been involved with wine personally and professionally his whole life. And did we forget to mention...he loves to drink wine!

A single-vineyard bottling from a cool, flat site at an altitude of 1,200 feet) Bright, pale yellow-straw. Lively aromas of peach, orange zest, acacia flower and spices. Quite dry and juicy, with very good energy to the flavors of soft citrus fruits and spices. The lingering finish displays real cut. This vibrant Viognier, done in neutral French oak and not put through malo, should reward a year in the bottle.

Food Pairings: Grilled shrimp and scallops with a simple chive, butter sauce

Expert Reviews



by Paul Gregutt

All den Hoed grapes—barrel fermented, neutral oak, no malolactic. Very rich, deep and racy, with glorious fruit. Full-bodied and lush without being heavy; it keeps the freshness and minerality, along with a full range of fruits from citrus to stone fruits to melon. Finishes with a lick of white pepper.

— (2/1/2011) — 93 Wine Enthusiast