

## Chardonnay – The Universal Wine

Almost everyone on the planet has heard of Chardonnay, in fact it is so popular that some people even name their children after it.

Chardonnay is commonly ordered as a type of wine from bars and restaurants but it is in fact the name of the most popular and possibly the most versatile grape in the world.

Almost all white Burgundy from Bourgogne Blanc to Chablis is made from 100% chardonnay grapes. The Chardonnay grape is also the mainstay in many types of champagne and is now even being used in Spain to make Cava.

The Chardonnay grape is so popular because it is easy to grow – that is probably why it is championed by so many grape producers. It can also be crafted into many different types of wines. Perhaps it is also so popular because it has little indigenous character of its own and instead displays the characteristics of the soil and climate where it is grown. Chardonnay has a propensity for acid and glycerine which is responsible for giving it a velvety texture – this is what is important in this type of grape. It is this texture which makes it so versatile when it comes to producing wine. It can be crafted into fresh lemony unoaked wine or aged in barrels to produce wine for a much richer palate. It is often seen as a cheap wine that is not worth trying but remember these grapes are used in top quality Chablis and Champagne, so don't dismiss this grape and wine out of hand.

Chardonnay now comes in a host of different styles – gone are the days when all the bottles were heavily oaked, there is a chardonnay suitable for every palate and pocket and because of the versatility of the grape from almost every wine producing country in the world.

So which are the types of Chardonnay to look out for? What do they taste like? Here are a couple of generalisations to get you on your way. Of course the best way to find out which one is your favourite is to get your glass out and start tasting your way around a few of the bottles!

France produces a ream of different Chardonnays. For pure unoaked Chardonnay look for a Chablis labelled unoaked. This is great with fish as it is delicate and unobtrusive. For a clean flavoured wine with a subtle fruit aroma look to the Meursault and Montrachet regions

California produces wines that work well with grilled seasoned foods. The Napa valley produces great oaky fruity wines which are ideal for outdoor eating and drinking. For an even fruitier riper flavour try something from the Santa Barbara region, these highly flavoured wines will even taste great with grilled meats.

For a Chardonnay that is intensely flavoured and almost best drunk without food head to Australia and try something from the Hunter Valley. This tropically flavoured wine is great chilled and shared with a friend.

There are so many different types of Chardonnay from so many different countries that you are bound to find something to suit your palate. So what are you waiting for?

### About the Author

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