

# THE WINEMAKER'S CLUB

## Burgundy Whites - March 15, 2008

### Chardonnay Profile

Green-skinned grape varietal used to make white wine.

**Color:** pale straw to gold (darker with age and oak).

#### **Nose:**

Aroma: (coming from the grape) Neutral in nose, nothing typically varietal. Blank canvas quality. Flavors affected by differences in soil, climate and vineyard practices.

Bouquet: (coming from winemaking and aging) Vanilla, butter/butterscotch (diacetyl produced in malolactic fermentation), yeastiness/toastiness (lees contact from battonage and aging sur lie).

#### **Mouth:**

Chardonnay has a blank canvas quality. Flavors are affected by differences in soil, climate, vineyard practices, and winemaking practices, as seen below.

Sweetness: Dry

Body: medium to full.

Alcohol: medium (cold regions) to high (hot regions)

Acidity: moderate (hot regions) to crisp (cold regions)

Characteristic tastes: Pineapple, peach (hot regions), green apple (cooler regions), clover, nuttiness.

### **Regional Characteristics:**

California: oak, pineapple, full-bodied, buttery.

Australia: oak, citrus

Burgundy: Only white grape permitted in the Chablis region of Burgundy (Bourgogne), In Chablis, Chardonnay is vinified usually with no oak, steely dry. Emphasizes the "Terrior," to produce crisp, "flinty" (flint, mineral, mint) wines. Chardonnay is blended to produce buttery, oaked white wines in the Meursault region. Chardonnay produced in other Burgundy regions and appellations: Corton-Charlemagne (rich and nutty with honey, spicy notes), Montrachet (floral bouquet, fruity, nutty and rich), Mâcon Blanc (citrus, crisp, fresh fruit), Pouilly-Fuissé (rich, green, floral).

Chile: tropical fruits, light oak, medium bodied.

Champagne: Chardonnay is also part of the Champagne blend (and Sparkling Wines), along with Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier, the latter two being red grapes vinified as white wines (without skin contact, "Blanc de Noir").

### **Overall:**

The Chardonnay grape does not have pronounced varietal characteristics, but shines through with winemaking enhancements (barrel fermentation, malolactic fermentation (diacetyl/butter flavor), lees contact, oak aging, etc.), which produces complex wines and long-lasting aftertastes that rival red wines. Also, the grape produces an excellent sugar and acid balance. Chardonnay may be produced in a wide range of styles, from a medium-body fruity wine to a full body oak-aged wine. Unlike most white wines, Chardonnay is capable for long term aging because of its high alcohol content (13-14%). Chardonnay will pair well with poultry dishes, pork, seafood or recipes that have a heavy cream base (especially oaky, buttery Chardonnay).