

BC GUILD OF WINE JUDGES

March 2013

CLASS C4 – OTHER DRY WHITE

Presented by Paul Bowden (Victoria Chapter)

AFTER COMPLETING THIS SESSION YOU SHOULD KNOW:

- The class definition of Other Dry White
- The Characteristics of Pinot Auxerrois
- The Characteristics of Chenin Blanc
- The Characteristics of Gruner Veltliner
- The Characteristics of Sauvignon Blanc
- The Characteristics of Sémillon
- The Characteristics of Chasselas
- The Characteristics of Madeline Angevine
- The Characteristics of Colombard
- The definition of Other Dry White Wine

BCAWA DEFINITION Class C4 – Other Dry White

This class contains all other white wines, either varietals or blends, which do not fit the descriptions of Classes C1 (Chardonnay), C5 (White Pinot), or C2 (Aromatic White Vinifera). A white wine to be consumed with food. Varietal vinifera wines in this class must contain 85% or more of vinifera varieties such as Auxerrois, Chasselas, Chenin blanc, Colombard, Grüner Veltliner, Madeleine Angevine, Sauvignon blanc, Semillon, or Trebbiano. The remaining 15% may be any ingredient. Blends in this class must not fit the definitions of C1, C5, or C2. Wines that include interspecific hybrid grapes are acceptable in this class and their ingredient percentages must be specified so their eligibility in the appropriate AWC class can be determined. Aromatic white grape varieties are acceptable in blends provided their impact is subdued. Non-grape dry white table wines belong in either this class or J1 (Country Table).

Technical Characteristics

Alcohol: 9% - 13.5%.

Colour: Pale bronze or bronze-pink to pale straw to light gold. No amber, brown or grey tinges.

Sugar: 0.0% - 1.5%.

Specific Gravity: 0.990 - 0.998.

Acidity: 6.0g/L - 7.5g/L.

pH: 3.0 - 3.7.

HISTORY

As this class includes many varietals, there is no history included.

GEOGRAPHY

Other Dry Whites are grown throughout the world. See "The Varietals" below for specific geography

DEFINING A DRY WINE

Wine grapes have varying degrees of natural sugars depending on the varietal, how late in the season the grape was harvested, and the level of concentration of the juices. During the fermentation process, yeast converts sugars from grape juice into alcohol. When a majority of the sugar is converted and residual sugar is less than one percent of the wine's volume (four grams of sugar per Liter), the wine is considered dry. Wines can also be considered medium dry if it contains a residual sugar of 12 g/L. Wines with higher levels of sugar are medium, or sweet.

Sweet and fruity are two terms are often confused in wine terminology. A fruity wine is not necessary a sweet one, and the driest of wines can still have multiple fruit characteristics. Fruity does not necessarily describe the wine's level of sweetness but rather its fruit characteristics. For example, Riesling may taste of apples, or Sauvignon Blanc may have flavours of gooseberries.

THE VARIETALS

Pinot Auxerrois (aka Auxerrois Blanc)

Auxerrois' tendency towards low acidity makes it suitable to cooler climates, such as England, Ontario's Niagara Peninsula, and in British Columbia where it is grown with some success. A descendant of a Pinot Noir and a Gouais Blanc cross, it is relegated to the higher Haut-Rhin vineyards in Alsace, where it is most often blended into that region's bulk wine, 'Edelzwicker'. It is also grown in the northeast Moselle region of Germany. Wine made from Auxerrois tends to be dry, with a musky aroma and some floral and citrus character.

Chenin Blanc

A versatile grape from France's Loire Valley, also grown with much success in South Africa and California. This white wine can range from dry to very sweet depending on the time of harvest, producing flavours that vary from apple, melon, lime and pear with hints of vanilla and honey. The best Chenin Blanc offers high acidity combined with a touch of viscosity – leaving an oil-like mouth feel.

Gruner Veltliner (*GREW-nuhr Felt-LEEN-ehr*)

Lean towards Green

The name may be intimidating but the grape is nothing but. This variety is increasing in popularity as more people discover its delicious qualities. Most wines made from Gruner Veltliner are from Austria, where it's the most planted grape variety. Gruner means green in German, not because the grape is green, but because its used to create fresh wines that are best-drunk young.

Notable Facts

A wine made from Gruner Veltliner typically has a perfumed nose, with hints of peach and other citrus and, most notably, hints of white pepper - white pepper is usually what distinguishes Gruner Veltliner best. Wines from this grape are typically dry with high acidity. It's generally light to medium bodied but can be made in a richer, full-bodied style. The wines of Gruner Veltliner are high in acid and extremely versatile with food. Some winemakers in Austria are making sweet wines with the grape as well.

Sauvignon Blanc

Originated in the Loire Valley of France. However, New Zealand has taken this grape to new heights in the cool Marlborough region, producing racy wines with tropical fruit and gooseberry flavours. Sauvignon Blanc is usually a dry white wine with distinctive herbaceous qualities. This wine is widely available as a single varietal or as a blend with Semillon.

Flavour Profile:

Typically a light to medium-bodied, crisp and refreshing white wine with notable acidity, Sauvignon Blanc offers a fairly wide range of flavours. From herbal taste sensations to veggie, and from flavours of grass, hay and mineral tones to a citrus and tropical flavour mix, Sauvignon Blanc displays a very unique wine tasting adventure.

Semillon

Goldy-Goldie

An essential white grape of Bordeaux, Semillon is a golden-berried goddess, producing some of the longest-lasting white wines ever made. It's the pride and joy of areas like Sauternes and Barsac for its ability to incur botrytis, or noble rot. The grape takes well to the fungus and in turn produces rich, golden, nectar-like wines that are truly decadent.

Notable Facts

The grape is a heavier grape, with low acids and an almost oily texture. It's easy to grow and high-yielding, although in Bordeaux, the vines are older and produce less fruit so that the grapes on the vine have more flavour.

Chasselas

Although the Chasselas's history is a controversial subject, it is supposed to be one of the most ancient grape varieties cultivated by man. Today, the Chasselas is the most widespread vine in Switzerland. Its basically neutral character allows its wines to express fully the differences in soil compositions and the diversity of climatic conditions. From there comes the enormous variety of Chasselas wines found in the French-speaking area of Switzerland, which constitutes its principal ground.

Madeleine Angevine

A lovely white grape with a Citrus flavour that is sweet and juicy as an eater. As a wine grape it makes a rich wine with a fine muscat bouquet.

Particularly well suited to the North and cooler climates as it flowers late but ripens early - and is a consistent performer, even in poorer years.

Originally from France. Early-Season fruit ripening.

Winter wood ripening is very good - so can be grown both outdoors or under protection

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Colombard

First used to make Cognac although not as popular for that purpose as Ugni Blanc and Baco Blanc. The Colombard has a high natural acidity making it a good choice for blends. Prone to rot and powdery mildew, the Colombard was the most widely planted grape in California until the early 1990s where it was often used as a base for jug wines. If given the proper treatment Colombard can produce crisp whites with citrus fruits and a pleasant minerality.

THE FLIGHT

The flight includes some of the varieties in this class, however due to the large number of varieties in this class it was not possible to include them all. That said, there was an effort made to include some of the more common varieties that you may see in competitions.

You should expect to see wines represented from various growing locations.