



# HIDDEN GEM WINES YOU'LL LOVE IF YOU DRINK THESE GRAPES

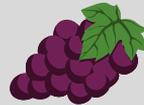
**BY PAUL MURPHY**



**NO DIRTY WINE.COM**

# INTRODUCTION

Chardonnay, Sauvignon Blanc, Pinot Grigio, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Pinot Noir. If you drink wine there's a very good chance you've tasted or heard of these basic varietals.



Don't get me wrong, these are the most popular types of wines for a reason. They appeal to the broadest audiences, they can be grown and produced for a reasonable price, and are readily available.



But there are more grapes out there. OVER TEN THOUSAND different wine grapes varieties exist. And each possesses aspects that delight the senses.

Here are just a few facts about our favorite wines and similar grapes you might not have heard of yet.





# CHARDONNAY FACTS

Chardonnay origins trace back to the Burgundy region of France and are related to Pinot Noir! In a chance crossing of Pinot Noir and an obscure varietal called Gouais Blanc (almost non-existent in France today), the most popular wine grape in the world, Chardonnay, was created. The main varietal in Champagne, this neutral grape gets the majority of its flavor and aroma from two main factors

1. The climate (terroir): Cooler climates tend to produce white fruit notes and warmer climates produce more tropical notes.
2. The winemaking practices: Whether they age the wine in oak (Oak= vanilla notes) or stainless steel tanks. And how they ferment the wine. (malolactic fermentation =buttery notes)

Regardless of what style of chardonnay you prefer. Take a chance and try one or all of these following wines.



# VIIGNIER

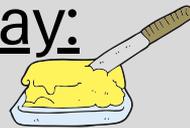
(vee-own-yay)

## Brief History:



Legend states the roman emperor Probus brought the grape to rhone by way of Croatia. Another legend says a group of outlaws captured a ship carrying the grape on its way to Beaujolais. Either way, it gained fame in southern France and is now grown in California, Australia, and all over the world.

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Chardonnay:



Stone Fruit, Honeysuckle, pears, melons, orange peel, and floral notes will appeal to any chardonnay drinker. Butter and Vanilla notes appear when oaked. The wine Bible says Viognier is "Chardonnay's ravishing, exotic sister." Both receive oak well, so whether you are looking for butter or pear and Citrus. Viognier will delivery, and spice up your wine lineup

# CHENIN BLANC

(shə-na<sup>n</sup>-'blä<sup>n</sup>)



## Brief History:

Originally from the Loire Valley of France, the versatility of this grape is its best strength.

A “Major Grape” in french blends such as Savennieres and Vouvray. Chenin Blanc, AKA Pineau de la Loire, or Steen also stars in blends in South Africa and California.

The wines can be everything from still to sparkling wines, ranging from drier to sweeter wines.

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar



## to Chardonnay:



Notes and aromas include; pear, yellow apple, ginger, light citrus, honeysuckle, and butter popcorn when oaked. So whether its apple, pear, citrus, buttered popcorn or vanilla you enjoy in a chardonnay, Find those same flavors in Chenin Blanc.

# GRENACHE BLANC

(Gren-Ahsh Blank)

## Brief History:



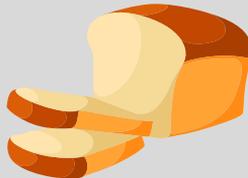
Known as the “Workhorse White Grape” of southern Rhone France, this varietal is the white mutation of the Garnache grape of Spain.

Mostly utilized in blends but beginning to gain popularity on its own in places like Australia and California



## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Chardonnay:

Low in acidity; Tropical fruit, Citrus Zest, and Floral Notes dominate the profile. As well as fresh-baked bread when oak is used. All of these make it a perfect swap for the same old chardonnay!



# SAUVIGNON BLANC FACTS



## Brief History:

Thought to be from the south of France, its name means "Wild" in French. Sauvignon Blanc is the co-parent along with Cabernet Franc of the legendary Cabernet Sauvignon.

The major grape in all White Bordeaux blends (including the sweet dessert wine Sauterne) Old World winemakers call it Sancerre or Pouilly Fume. Most new world winemakers just call it by the grapes name but a few refer to SB as Fume Blanc. Some of it's best examples come from the Loire Valley in France, Marlborough New Zealand, and Northern California.

Old World SB's tend to be more earthy while expressions from New Zealand and other new world vineyards shout Grass, Grapefruit, (even cat pee) from the rooftop as soon as you pop the bottle. Hold on to that bottle though and try one of these following wines instead first, you might never go back!

# SÉMILLON

(SEM-ee-yawn)



## Brief History:

Born in Bordeaux France and used to balance out the White Bordeaux and Sauterne Blends. This grape has been all over the world. It shines by itself in Australia, and Aussies consider the wine a national treasure. At one point in the early 19th century, the vast majority of South Africa's grapes were Semillon or "Wyndruif" as they called it. Which simply means "Wine Grape".

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Sauvignon Blanc:

Warmer climates produce chardonnay like flavors while cooler climates including parts of Australia and France produce the grassy, grapefruit, limey goodness we all look for in Sauvignon Blancs.



# GRÜNER VELTLINER



(GREW-ner VELT-leaner)

## Brief History:

With ties to the Roman Empire, Grüner Veltliner found its home in Austria. There it became the country's most planted grape. Thought to be the grandchild of Pinot Noir, this grape is soaring in popularity. Taste one and you'll see why.

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Sauvignon Blanc:

White pepper and Lemongrass with a light citrus twist give this dry white very similar notes to a NZ Sauvignon Blanc!



# ALBARIÑO

(al-bar-EEN-yo)



## Brief History:

Grown in Spain and Portugal for hundreds of years, it has become increasingly popular recently in the new world. It is the perfect pair for seafood and grilled veggies due to the high acidity and lighter body.

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Sauvignon Blanc:

Stone fruits, Citrus zest, Honeysuckle, and a hint of Salinity gives the pride of Spain a fighting chance against any Sauvignon Blanc. Stash that bottle of SB for now and dive into an Albariño!



# PINOT GRIGIO FACTS



## What's in a name?:

Our first section will be a simultaneous introduction and first new (sorta) wine to taste. And its all due to the name. Most people have heard of Pinot Grigio. It is a sort of "grape-flavored water wine" as I call it. On a hot sunny day though, an ice-cold pinot grigio is heaven. But have you heard of Pinot Gris? They are actually the same grape!

## **PINOT GRIS** (PEE-no GREE)



Originally from Alsace France. But traveled to a foreign country (Italy) and changed its name to pinot grigio. Much like a rebellious teenager. Beloved by all in Italy and all across the globe for its neutral, easy-drinking flavors

Pinot Gris however is more full-bodied, less fruity, spicy, and coats your mouth more than it's Italian counterpart. Besides France, Pinot Gris can be found wherever good white wine is grown,

but stands out in California, Oregon, Germany and surprisingly British Columbia. Some Pinot Gris and Grigios even become Orange Wines!

## ●Mid-Book Bonus●

### What is an Orange Wine?

We've all heard of white, red, and rose wines. But Orange wines? Yes, that is a thing. it is NOT made from Oranges! Actually orange wine has been around for thousands of years and traces back to the country of Georgia.

Typically with white wines the grape skins are removed before fermentation. And with red wines the skins are left on. Orange wine takes the red wine process of leaving the grape skins on and applies it to white wine!

Therefore any white wine that is "skin-fermented" is an Orange Wine! Depending on the grape they will vary in hue of orange and flavors will mimic the grape variety but more subtle and subdued.

# GAVI

(GA-v)



## Brief History:

Exclusively made in Piedmont Italy from the Cortese grape, it's lineage dates back to the 1600s. During the 1960s and 70s many wine experts hailed Cortese di Gavi as the best white wine in all of Italy. Pinot Grigio took a backseat until the 80's.

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Pinot Grigio:

Gavi is bone dry with great minerality and crisp acidity. Making it complement dishes like Pesto pasta and grilled summer veggies. Packing more character than most pinot grigios out there, give Gavi a taste.



# VERMENTINO

(VER-MEN-TEEN-OH)



## Brief History:

Mostly commonly grown on the Italian island of Sardinia and known as "Rolle" in France. (Rolle is used in Provence Rose blends in small amounts) It can be oaked or unoaked depending on the winemaking style. This wine goes hand and hand with the classic fish soups of the Italian Riviera and used as an ingredient in these soups as well.

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Pinot Grigio:

Vermentino is known to have notes of lime, apple, honeysuckle, and finish with crisp minerality that will stand up to, and put most Pinot Grigios to shame!



# CABERNET SAUVIGNON

(CAB-er-nay sew-vin-YAWN)



## FACTS:

### Brief History:

“Cabernet can be like the awkward kid who grows up to be a Nobel laureate, and sexy to boot.” -The Wine Bible

The most popular and well-known grape was given to this world by chance. Many theories existed as to its origins but DNA testing proves that Cabernet Sauvignon is the cross between Cabernet Franc and Sauvignon Blanc.

In the past, it's best known in the Bordeaux blends (Cabernet, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Petite Verdot) in the Medoc region of France. But Napa Valley, California is the New World's home for cabernet in my opinion.

Great expressions of Cab also can be grown in other parts of northern California, Washington state, Italy, and Australia.

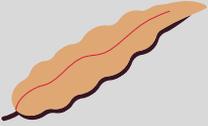


# CABERNET SAUVIGNON

CONTINUED

With many other regions growing the grape as well. Dark Berries, Mint, Leather, Tabacco and Chocolate are the most common notes you'll

find in a Cabernet.



Well made Cab's are delicious now and have the ability to be aged for many years, developing powerful yet elegant characteristics when aged in oak. Be on the lookout for intense green pepper flavors, however. That could be a sign of unripe grapes and poorly made wine!



I'll never stop drinking Cabernet and I'm sure if you love it you won't either. But next time you have the choice, try these wines instead and you might add them to your wine stash from here out!



# TEMPRANILLO

(tem-pra-KNEE-oh)

## Brief History:

Legend states that the Phoenicians brought the grape to Spain over 3,000 years ago.

They tend to ripen earlier than most other Spanish varietals hence its name is similar in Spanish to "early". (Temprano) Spain's Noble grape is used most famously grown in the region on Rioja. Where it has all sorts of regulations on how long the wine can age in oak and in the bottles. In Portugal, it is the main grape in the fortified Port Wine. Also grown in Argentina, Chile, California, and even Texas!

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar



### to Cabernet:



Young Tempranillo can have lighter berry and cherry notes like a Pinot Noir but we are looking for the wine to be aged in oak. Once aged, Tempranillo develops Tabacco, Leather, Cedar, and more Darker Berries just like a full-bodied Cabernet



# SYRAH

(sear-AH)

## Brief History:

I'll start with a quote from the Wine Bible;  
"Syrah has always reminded me of the kind  
of guy who wears cowboy boots with a  
tuxedo. Manly, yet elegant."

Smoke, leather, cured meats, iron, tobacco,  
and pepper are just some of the beefed-up  
and bold flavors of Syrah.

Originally from France, Syrah has made its  
home as "Shiraz" hitting the shores of  
Australia in the 19th century. Since then it  
has flourished all over like in Spain,  
Argentina, South Africa, and the US.

Although sometimes used interchangeably,  
Syrah typically refers to wines made in  
cooler climates with a more terroir-driven  
focus while Shiraz is made in warmer  
climates and produces big fruity, bold spicy  
flavors.

# Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Cabernet:



Dark fruit, oak, vanilla, chocolate, and tobacco are what make a Syrah so enjoyable. Also, these aromas and flavors are what make this wine a perfect addition to your rotation of full-bodied reds. Hold on to that cabernet for a little and reach for a bottle of Syrah or Shiraz!



## What about Petite Syrah(Sirah)?

Petite Syrah is the offspring of Syrah and an obscure french grape named Peloursin. Also known as Durif, it was created in the late 19th century. The name is quite deceiving though! Small in size the petite Sirah packs a powerful punch of jammy flavors and tons of tannins!



# NERO D'AVOLA

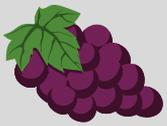
(NER-O Da-vo-la)

## Brief History:

Grown mostly in Sicily, Italy but also appears in Australia and California. This deep, dark, fruit becomes a complex, rich full-bodied wine (also called Calabrese) that will knock the socks off any cabernet drinker.

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Cabernet:

Just like a cabernet, young expressions of the wine will have bright young fruit like plum and raspberries. While Nero d'Avola's that have been aged, especially in oak, will see darling more mouth-filling flavors and aromas. Much like a great full-bodied cabernet, you will find chocolate, tobacco, and dark fruits.



# PINOT NOIR FACTS:

Pinot Noir is one of the oldest grape varieties dating back thousands of years. Burgundy, France is pinot noirs home but it has mutated and traveled all over the world. A difficult grape to grow and generally enjoys cooler climates, its one-third of the grape trio that makes up the champagne blend of sparkling wine. (Chardonnay, Pinot Noir and Pinot Meunier) Over the decades pinot noir has mutated to the Pinot Gris aka Pinot Grigio Grape and the Pinot Blanc Grape.

The Pinot Noir grape varies greatly depending on where it is grown. The loins share of the pinot noir grapes are grown in France, especially in Burgundy. These wines like most others are more terroir-driven in flavors than any new world counterpart. But Pinot Noir expresses this more deeply and dramatically.



# PINOT NOIR

CONTINUED

Bright cherry and raspberry both play their parts in each wine but the french style is more earthy and floral with notes of violet



even.



California has more fruity flavors throughout with graham cracker and vanilla notes in the end if oak was used. Willamette, Oregon is actually on the same latitude as Burgandy, France so delicious more earthy pinot noir examples are produced there. Argentina, Germany, Italy, and New Zealand also try their hand at the wine.

There's no denying Pinot Noir will always have a place in my heart. But next time you find yourself with the chance to taste one of these following wines, dive in! Cheers!



# GAMAY

(Gam-May)

## Brief History:

Mostly grown in France where it has become famous in the Beaujolais and Beaujolais Nouveau. The two styles of Gamay tell a very different story. With both styles, the majority of the winemakers use a unique process for making the wine. It's called carbonic maceration.

It starts in the fields where the grapes are handpicked. This ensures no rotten grapes sneak into the wine and the clusters are perfect and whole. Then they are placed in a wine barrel to let gravity do the work. Having the weight of packed grape clusters press the grapes below and start the fermentation process until this light fruity wine is created.



Then it is usually rested in new oak. The Nouveau style became popular in the late mid 20th century with marketers trying to sell the wine 1-2 months earlier than the old school method. This results in flabby immature tastes and franky gives Beaujolais a bad name! Gamay is also grown in Oregon's Willamette Valley, Canada, and Australia.

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Pinot Noir:

Light in color and body, Gamay shows bright young red fruits and floral notes including violets. Because of the carbonic maceration gamay also might have banana notes. All of these flavors plus a little added spicy notes makes this Gamay Noir a top pick tonight instead of the same old Pinot!





# BARBERA

(bar-BEAR-a)

## Brief History:

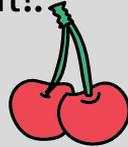
“The wine of the people”, this grape is third most planted in Italy where it has been grown for centuries. Historically this wine did not make it out of Italy and was consumed fresh and fast by the Italian people. Then in the mid 20th century, new world wine producers tried their hand at barbera until an illegal additive slipped into Italian Barbera killed dozens of people.

Another example of a dirty wine.

#nodirtywine Recently winemakers are producing delicious clean barbera in northern California and Australia in addition to being grown clean in piedmont Italy

# Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Pinot Noir:

Cherries, raspberries, strawberries, vanilla, and spice are Barbera's most common flavors and aromas. These notes along with low tannins and high acidity will stand up to any pinot noir. So next time there's a Barbera option, go for it!.



## RANDOM WINE FACT:



The original Bellini cocktail was invented in Italy in the early 20th century. Giuseppe Cipriani who owned Harry's Bar in Venice loved the painter Giovanni Bellini and when adding white peach juice to prosecco, said it reminded him of Bellini's artwork.



# GRENACHE

(gren-AHSH)

## Brief History:

Spain is Garnacha's (gar-NA-cha) home but became "grenache" when grown in France.

One-third of the Grenache, Syrah, and Mourvèdre blend found in Châteauneuf-du-Pape and other Rhône Valley blends. It is also grown in the US, Italy, and Australia, but only in small amounts and nothing like the Spanish or French versions. A white mutation named Garnacha Blanc has notes of apple, pear, and bread and butter when oaked, just like a chardonnay.

## Tasting Notes & Why it's Similar to Pinot Noir:

Red fruits and dark fruits dominate with spices such as; black and white pepper, cinnamon, and star anise fill the palette giving any pinot noir a run for its money. So if you see; GSM, Châteauneuf-du-Pape, Cannonau, or Garnatxa just to name a few Aliases. There's the Grenache grape in that bottle. Give it a taste!

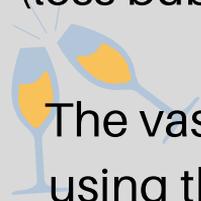
# BONUS BUBBLES!

Next, let's explore the two most popular bubbles; Prosecco and Champagne. Then we will discover some delicious alternatives to the same old bubbles. Cheers!

## PROSECCO FACTS



The sparkling white wine prosecco has been around for thousands of years, originating from the town that bears its name in northeast Italy. Ranging from dry to sweet (brut to demi-sec) and from spumante (normal bubbles) to frizzante (less bubbles) to a completely still wine, tranquillo.



The vast majority of prosecco is made using the Charmat-Martinotti or tank method. Fermenting the wine in big steel tanks. Unlike the way champagne is produced, fermenting the wine for the second time in the bottles to get those bubbles.

# **PROSECCO** CONTINUED

There are many classifications of prosecco but just know it at least has to have the letters "DOC" on the side of the cork packaging. Up until very recently the name prosecco and the grape were used interchangeably but now the grape has been officially named "Glera"

## **CHAMPAGNE FACTS**

Named for the region in which it was created, Champagne France has been growing grapes since the Romans times. The traditional process of creating those tiny bubbles was thought to be created in the 16th century by monks. The legend that the monk Dom Pérignon accidentally invented champagne is just that, a legend. But he did add tremendous value to champagnes early formation, consistency, and business side to the vineyards.

# CHAMPAGNE

**CONTINUED**

The champagne blend consists of; Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, and Pinot Meunier.

With some tiny amounts of other grapes including Pinot Gris and Pinot Blanc to be added to the blend. But is strictly regulated, from where the grapes can be grown to how it is produced and bottled.

## CAVA

(kaa·vuh)

### Brief History:

Born in the caves of Catalan Spain cava is made primarily of three grapes.

Macabeo(Mac-a-Bay-Oh), Parellada (Par-ah-YA-da) and Xarel·lo(Sha-REL-OH) make up the Cava blend. Winemakers in Catalan use the traditional method to produce the sparkling wine, having the second fermentation be in the bottles just like in Champagne.

## Tastings Notes:

Both Cava and Champagne are produced using the traditional method of secondary fermentation. So the little bubbles are created in the bottles. With Citrus, almond, and toast notes, a Spanish cava blend will surprise you next time you crave a little bubbles in your life.

## **CRÉMANT** (Kre-ma)

### Brief History:

Crémant is a term for sparkling wine made in France but outside the champagne region. Originally it was named Crémant due to the more delicate, creamier texture compared to champagne. But as time went on it became more about where the grapes are grown. Alsace, Loire, Bordeaux, and, Bourgogne are some of the top appellations that produce these sparkling wines.

While champagne contains mostly Pinot Noir, Chardonnay, and Pinot Meunier, Crémants will vary in grape blends. These blends include well know grapes such as; Pinot Blanc, Pinot Gris, Pinot Noir. Along with more obscure grapes like Pineau d'Aunis, Grolleau, and Auxerrois.

## Tastings Notes:

Made with secondary fermentation just like champagne, this process produces brioche and bread-like notes regardless of style. Besides how its made, Crémants will vary in flavors and aromas. From citrus to stone fruits to almonds each blend will differ. All the more reason to try a glass of as many Crémants as possible whenever you see a bottle!