



Wine Club Tasting Notes

March 2008

2006 Yalumba “Y Series” Viognier South Australia

The first thing you need to know about this wine is how to pronounce it – *vee oh nyay*. Now we can get down to business. It has been quite awhile since we’ve brought you selections from Australia, and these come from the very highly decorated and renowned winery Yalumba. Those zany Aussies just can’t help themselves when it comes to giving their wines or wineries quirky, often aboriginal names and Yalumba is no exception – “yalumba” is aboriginal for “all the land around.” Hey, at least it’s not Dancing Croc or Jiggy Koala. The winery was founded in 1849 by Samuel Smith, British migrant and English brewer, who brought his family to Australia seeking a new life. Smith soon purchased 30 acres of land and he and his son began planting the first vines by moonlight. Six generations and more than 150 years later, Yalumba is Australia’s oldest family owned winery and is seen as one of Australia’s finest independent wine companies. Yalumba is also an eco-friendly winery, dedicated to sustainable agriculture processes, and in 1999, Yalumba became the first Australian winery to sign up for the Greenhouse Challenge, which is an initiative dedicated to reducing greenhouse gas emissions.

Okay, enough history on the winery – now for the low-down on this ethereal grape variety. Viognier is THE white wine grape of the northern Rhone Valley, producing the white wines Condrieu and Chateau Grillet. For the longest time, France was really the only country that produced this grape. Why? Well, if Pinot Noir is the red grape that gives winemakers the biggest head and heart aches, then Viognier is it’s sister white grape, but doubly so. “Viognier is incredibly challenging and demands handling with kid gloves,” according to winemaker Louisa Rose. “It’s unpredictable, difficult to grow and the yields are low. It always has the ability to surprise you – one day the grapes on the vine are dull and flavorless yet the very next day there’ll be the explosion of musky apricot characters that make it so appealing.” California has been making strides with this variety over the past decade or so, and now more Australian winemakers have taken the plunge.

But on the positive side of the ledger, this is probably one of the sexiest white wine grape varieties there is, hands down! The resulting wines are high in three things – color (deep yellow), alcohol (14.5% in this case) and perfume. And the perfume, oh, the perfume...absolutely stunning and headily redolent of apricots, peaches and blossoms. On the palate it has a silky, rich and luscious mouthfeel that always leaves

you wanting more. One thing of note, this wine should be drunk young, so don't let it sit in the cellar for too long. You must try this wine with a simple dish of grilled lobster with drawn butter – you won't regret it!