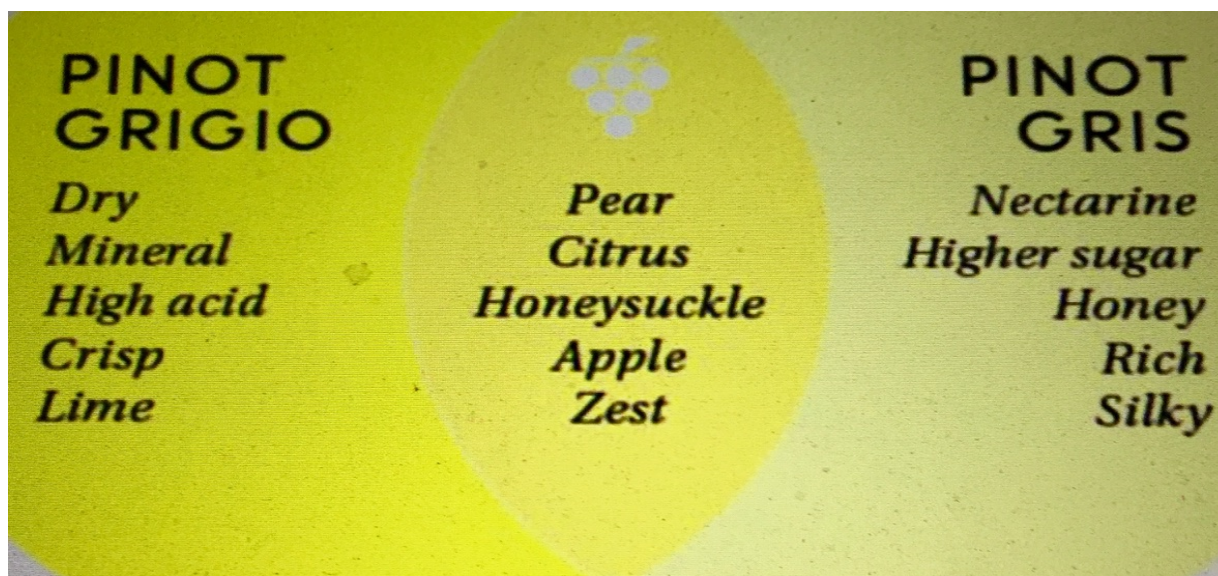


FEBRUARY 2021 WAG VARIETAL WINE TASTING NOTES

PINOT GRIGIO

In Australia, winemakers have the freedom to use the labels gris and grigio interchangeably, although there is the unregulated understanding that wines with a higher level of extract could/should be labelled pinot gris and those with less extract named pinot grigio.



RIESLING

Riesling wines range from water white in colour to straw green and deep yellow-gold. This high-acid variety displays zesty, juicy flavours of lemon, lime and tart Granny Smith apples when it is less ripe, and richer, warmer flavours such as apricot, pineapple and ginger as it increases in sweetness. As it ages, it begins to show nutty, toasty and honeyed characters.



ZIPPY
*Lemon, lime,
green apple*



RICH
*Apricot, peach,
pineapple*



COMPLEX
*Nuts, toast,
honey*



OTHER
*Slate, blossoms,
spice*

Australian rieslings tend to be steely, dry wines with stunning citrus flavours.

SAUVIGNON BLANC

Sauvignon blanc is celebrated for its lifted aromas and vivid fruit flavours, also with distinctive herbal and mineral characters. While it is well known for crisp, refreshing wines that run the gamut from bright and zesty to ripe and tropical, winemaking approaches like oak ageing, wild fermentation and lees stirring can create richer, more textural styles.



GRAPEFRUIT



PASSIONFRUIT



CUT GRASS



BELL PEPPER



MELON

CHARDONNAY

For a long time, the reputation of Australian chardonnay was mired by the butter-yellow, toffee-scented chardonnays produced in the 1970s and 1980s. Now, more appropriate environments and less heavy-handed winemaking have created examples that are lighter and more restrained.



FRUIT

White peach, apple, pear, passionfruit



OAK

Butter, pastry, vanilla



OTHER

Jasmine, almond, citrus peel, honeysuckle

There are two primary styles of chardonnay, and fans tend to prefer one or the other. There is the classic rich, buttery, oak-influenced style, and the one that is lean, citrusy, and fresh. In Australian chardonnay today, more wines have found a middle ground, offering the best of both worlds.

PINOT NOIR

There's an old Burgundian saying that reads: "Get the bouquet right and the palate will look after itself." This is true of pinot noir. The variety is often considered ethereal; it's light and bright with loads of complexity.

Expressions differ depending on the region, but as a cool-climate grape, it tends to be silken with a peacock-feather finish and red fruits ranging from strawberries to cherries.

Naturally higher in acidity and with fine, soft tannins, you can also find pinot noir with an earthier palate.

When tasting, one must remember that pinot noir is not a big red wine. This is a variety that's tricky to perfect, but once you do, it's all delicacy and finesse.

TASTING CHARACTERISTICS



FLORAL

Rose petals, cherry blossoms, violet



FRUIT

Strawberry, cherry, raspberry, cranberry, plum



EARTH

Mushroom, truffle, forest floor



HERB/SPICE

Clove, liquorice, pepper, dried herbs

MERLOT

In Australia, merlot is a wine that defies a set style. Grown in nearly every region of the country, it can be tight and perfumed with liquorice characters, like those coming out of the [Eden Valley](#); full of plum and cassis in true Barossa style; or medium-bodied and spicy from the [Hunter Valley](#).

While planted all over, this varietal favours cooler regions. [Coonawarra](#) is recognised as one of the best Australian regions for merlot, with most wines from here resplendent in sweet berry flavours and a silky elegance.

Rich, velvety, beautifully balanced wine that will live for half a century or more if carefully cellared.”
– James Halliday

Merlot is a varietal that sits smack dab in the middle of the red wine spectrum, with medium levels of tannin, acidity and alcohol (12-15%). It's most famous for its red-fruit flavours (namely cherry, plum and raspberry), easy-drinking tannins and super-soft finish. But depending on how it's vinified and where it has been grown, merlot can be transformatory.



Incredibly dark in colour, even blue at times, the trick to telling the visual difference between merlot and cabernet sauvignon all comes down to light. If you hold a glass up to the light, merlot-based wines will tinge orange around the rim.

SHIRAZ

Shiraz can create wines with varying flavour profiles and structures depending on where it's grown and how it's made. For ease, let's focus on Australian shiraz.



This grape thrives in moderate to warm climates, but it's increasingly found in cooler regions. The typical flavours of Australian shiraz are spice, blue fruit, black fruit and pepper. If a winemaker is looking to produce a full-bodied style, then you can expect rich, ripe and intense fruit flavours.

Historically, Max Schubert (the creator of Penfolds Grange) fundamentally changed the way Australian winemakers approached shiraz. He kick-started the process of using juice run-off and

open vats to regulate the temperature of ferments and added cooler-grown, higher-acid grapes to give the shiraz freshness, vibrancy and that deep colour.

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Cabernet sauvignon is known for its deep colour, full body and alcohol content that is generally above 13.5 per cent. Often tannic in its youth, this is a wine that improves with age and typically hits peak drinkability after three or four years. When tasting blind, you can sometimes tell a cabernet sauvignon by the 'doughnut' effect it can have on the palate – filling out the mid-palate is one reason it's popularly blended with varieties such as shiraz and merlot.



Cabernet sauvignon has aromas of cedar, cassis and currant, and often a defining hint of mint. It is also associated with a green capsicum note attributed to an organic compound group called pyrazines.