

Alternative varieties on show could predict the future

Dan Traucki

Wine Assist Pty Ltd
Wine Industry Consultants

Go back thirty or forty years in time, and had the chief executive's of Australia's top 10 or 20 wine companies got together for a glass of white wine and discussed the future trends in the industry, they would have been drinking Riesling, Chablis or White Burgundy. They certainly would not have been drinking or discussing Chardonnay.

It would have been a very bold person who back then had the audacity to predict that Chardonnay would become the pre-eminent white wine variety in Australia within 10-15 years. They probably would have been laughed out of the room. Sure, Chardonnay was highly successful in its native France, and some other countries made a decent Chardonnay, but here, Riesling was the undisputed king of white wines.

Indeed 30 years ago Chardonnay was what we would call today an alternative variety in Australia. In 1983 in the Barossa Valley there were 133 hectares of Chardonnay out of the 3,397ha of white varieties planted.

We live in a society of constant change and innovation, where people are always looking for something new and exciting. Australians are some of the best innovators on the planet. Those businesses that embrace change and go with it usually do quite nicely. That was certainly the case with Chardonnay. How many people still working in the wine industry today can recall the aura surrounding the early Tyrell's Vat 47 Chardonnays or having their own company's meagre supply of Chardonnay on strict allocation, reserved only for their very best customers?

Come back to today, and ask members of the wine industry what the next big thing in wine will be. You will get all sorts of opinions, depending on who you ask and what barrow they are pushing at the time. For example Pinot Gris if you are trying to ramp up sales of your wines into the United States.

Whilst it is extremely unlikely that another variety, red or white, will emulate the runaway success of Chardonnay, there are a number of grape varieties, which have the latent potential to succeed and become mainstream varieties here in Australia in the future. These are varieties, which have great popularity or a proven track record in their native countries. Varieties such as Sangiovese, Nebbiolo and Fiano from Italy, Tempranillo and Albarino from Spain, Zinfandel from the United States, Malbec from Argentina, Tannat from Uruguay and Saperavi from Georgia.

There are a number of enterprising, mainly small winemakers, experimenting with these and many other new varieties from overseas, just like other adventurous winemakers did with Chardonnay in the late 1960s and early 1970s.

However, there is one excellent way to have a glimpse at the future and the opportunities it will bring. That is by attending the Australian Alternative Varieties Wine Show (AAVWS), which is held in Mildura each November and attracts more than 500 entries. Each year the number of entries as well as the diversity of entries continues to increase. A substantial program has evolved around the wine show, including a seminar and tasting – this November's will be Benchmarks, Blends & Biodynamics with the Chief of Judges Max Allen. There are a number of special dinners, such as this year's A Kiss of Viognier Dinner, along with the Mildura Jazz Festival, the presentation Long Lunch as well as the all-important tasting session on the Saturday Morning.

One bite and it's goodnight to grubs



with Delfin.®

Delfin®, a biological insecticide, is the brand you can trust. When hungry grubs attack your vines, Delfin kills them off fast.

One bite and they lose their appetite – so it's goodnight.

Delfin's highly selective Bt chemistry is an excellent tool for Integrated Pest Management with minimal impact on beneficial insects. Delfin can be used all year round and has the added benefit of no withholding period.

So don't give grubs a chance – put them out of business fast with Delfin.



**Delfin.
Stops hungry
grubs fast.**

® Delfin is a registered trademark of Certis USA LLC.

Chemtura Australia Pty Ltd CHA 5291