

Grillo

GREEL-oh

(Origin: Sicily, Rank: 103)

Aromas and flavours: Aromatic, almonds, lemon, floral.

Similar varieties: Insolia, Slankamenka.

Grillo is the variety of choice for making high-alcohol wines to make Sicily's famed fortified wine Marsala.

Like other fortified wines, Marsala has suffered a decades-long decline in popularity. Therefore, Grillo is now used more often to produce moderately aromatic, crisp, dry white wines with good structure. Plantings of this variety in Sicily are increasing rapidly as a result of its vigour in the vineyard and its ability to produce fashionable crisp dry whites.

There are no significant areas of this variety outside Italy. Attempts to introduce this variety in Australia hit a snag when it was found that most of the vines planted were in fact an obscure Balkan variety Slankamenka, in circumstances similar to the early attempts to introduce Albarino.

Grillo wines are full-bodied and slightly aromatic.

Food choices: The crisp acidity of these wines can be paired with fried seafood dishes, or perhaps with Sicilian favourite Pasta alla Norma (a rich eggplant-based sauce).

Grüner Veltliner

GROO-ner FELT-lee-ner

(Origin: Austria, Rank: 41)

Aromas and flavours: White pepper, peaches, pears, celery, melon.

Similar varieties: Riesling.

This high-quality white wine variety makes up over a third of the vineyard area in Austria. It is also grown extensively in nearby countries of Central Europe.

Grüner Veltliner has rapidly gained popularity in South Australia's Adelaide Hills Region, thanks to the pioneering work of the Hahndorf Hill Winery that has persuaded and cajoled dozens of their neighbours to grow and vinify the variety.

A versatile variety, Grüner Veltliner can make crisp dry whites for early consumption or, if picked a little later, it makes richer dry white styles with potential for ageing. Off-dry and medium-bodied wines are also made. It is most commonly used as a straight varietal.

Food choices: Its Austrian homeland suggests Wiener schnitzel, but the firm acidity copes well with mildly spiced Asian foods. Not many wines marry well with asparagus or artichokes: Grüner Veltliner is one exception.

Inzolia

inn-SOHL-yah

(Origin: Sicily, Rank: 98)

Aromas and flavours: Aromatic, almonds, flowers, peaches, citrus.

Similar varieties: Grillo, Greco.

This variety originated in Sicily where it is widely used, but it is also grown in Tuscany under the name of Ansonica. It is not grown to any extent outside Italy.

