

Consumers make the trends!

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In California, Chardonnay is the queen of the white varietals. But in the last few years, chardonnay has undergone a consumer-driven style makeover.

The demand for big and bold chardonnay style wines evolved to lighter and more complex styles. Winemakers made the adjustments by reducing the amount of oak in the production process. They now ferment in stainless steel casks instead of oak barrels which retains the natural acidity. The new chardonnays are refreshing, elegant and refined and enjoyable on their own without food.

A current trend among wine producers in California is producing wine in new regions. Grapes are sourced from cooler climates and higher altitudes, which in turn produces chardonnays that are more fruit forward in style.

Labeling in general is starting to change in the market as well. To help consumers identify different styles, some wineries are using the words 'unoaked' or 'naked' on the labels. One example of this is from Clay Station, as its label changed from 'viognier' to 'viognier unoaked'.

So what is the perfect amount of oak? Well it is simply a matter of personal preference. You can have a Chardonnay with no oak that offers a crisp and clean taste or a hint of oak that would give it a creamier flavour.

Those who enjoy oaky wine usually prefer the buttery flavor that the oak provides. There is a style of Chardonnay for every white wine lover.

Suggestions:

Cupcake Vineyards Chardonnay, USA ~ oaky, buttery, creamy, vanilla, spice with hints of apple, tropical fruit
\$15.29

Little Black Dress Chardonnay, USA~ Soft oak, tropical fruit \$15.99

No. 99 Wayne Gretzky Estates Unoaked, Canada ~ peach, pear, lemon citrus, complex minerality
\$16.99