



White Rhone Tasting

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February 13, 2021

White Rhone Tasting Agenda

DON'T LOOK AT PAGE 4 OF THE HANDOUT

- 6:00 to 6:45 Taste the wine and post your votes.

**ONLY VOTE ON WINES 1 THROUGH 6
WINES 7 AND 8 ARE THE PRE-WINES**

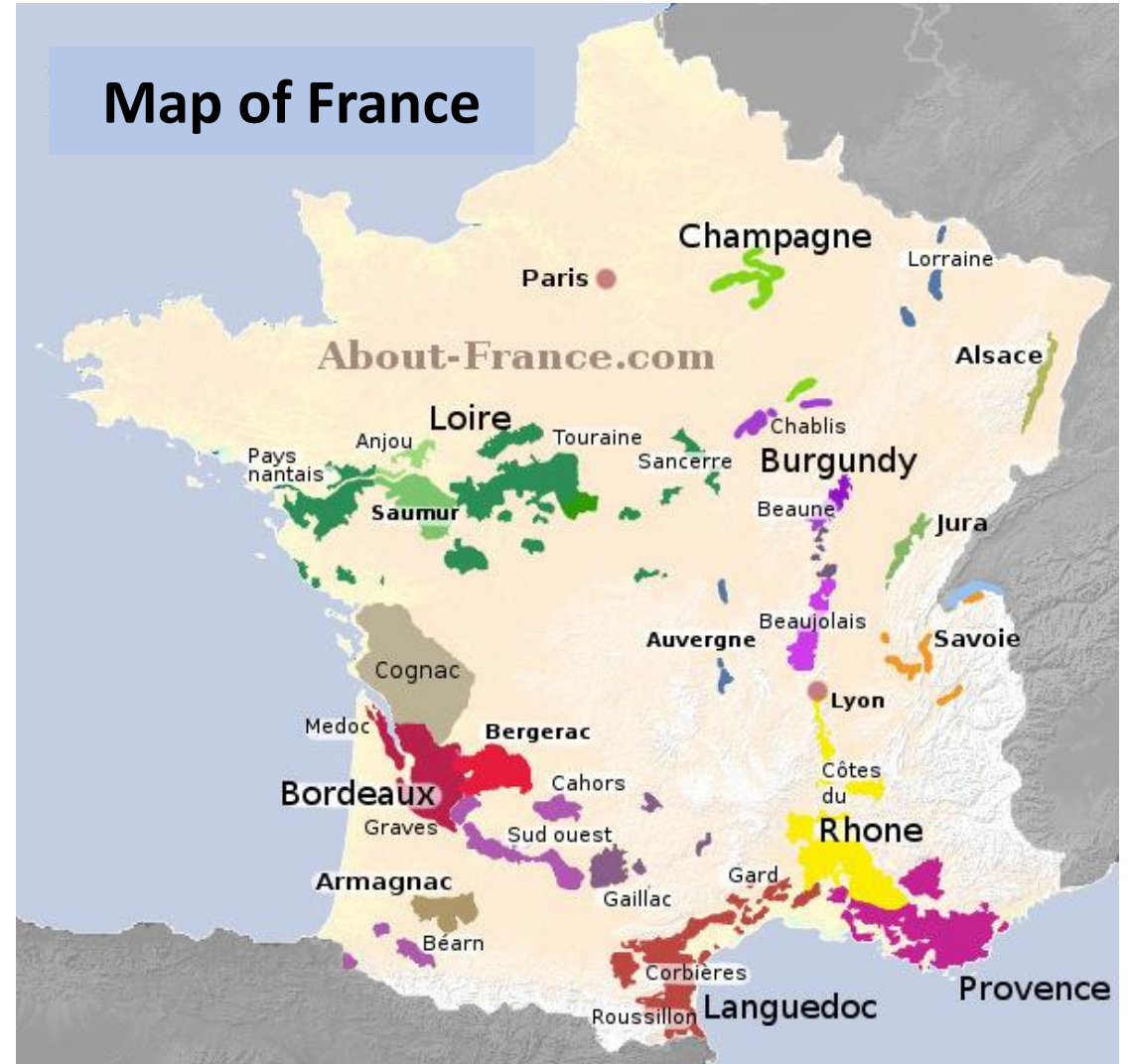
- 6:45 to 7:00 Discussion of White Rhone led by Steve Smith.
- 7:00 Sharp Voting closes.
- 7:00 to 7:05 Comments on White Rhone from anyone.
- 7:05 to 7:10 Announcement of the Tasting Results.
- 7:10 to ? Discussion of the wines.
- ? Until 8:00? Social time (if needed – I will drop at 7:30).
- For voting go to CellarSocietySF.org and choose “Members Only”.
 - The password is “xxxxx”.
- The wines are: Three 2018 Condrieu (Viognier) from \$50 to \$60.
Three 2018/2019 CdP Blanc (blends) from \$40 to \$65.

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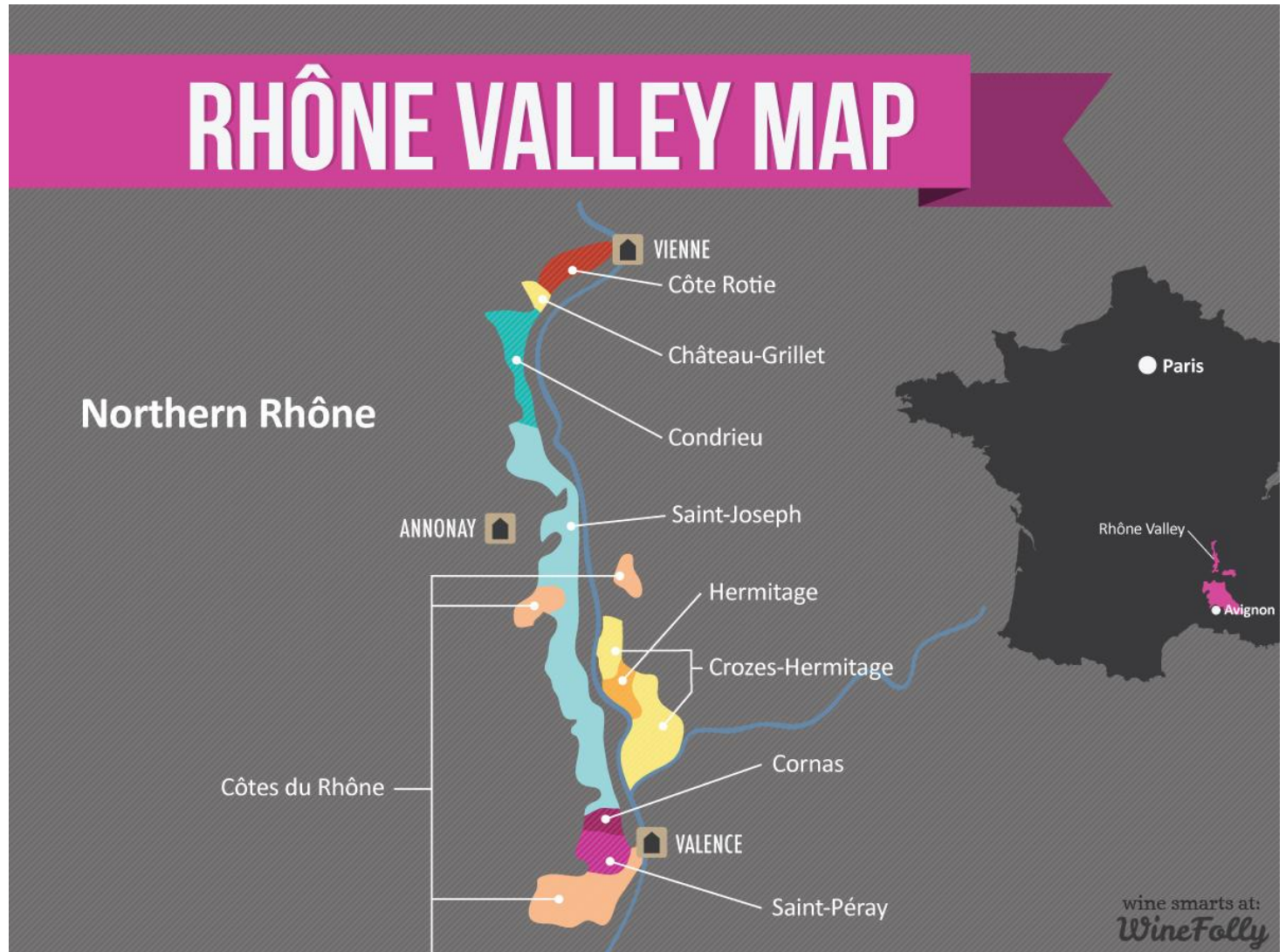
Where is the Rhone Valley?

- The Rhone Valley is in South-Eastern France
- Most of the same grapes are grown further south in Languedoc – Roussillon and Provence, but not in any other region.
- Like the rest of France, the best wines use the names of the Cru Appellations (see the next 2 slides).



What are the Northern Rhone Wines?

- The reds are **Syrah** from Cote Rotie, Hermitage, Cornas, St. Joseph and Crozes-Hermitage.
 - The white only crus are **Condrieu & Ch. Grillet** (**Viognier**) and **St. Peray** (**Marsanne & Roussanne**).
 - White wines from mostly **Marsanne** are made in **Hermitage, Crozes-Hermitage** and **St. Joseph**.
- Grapes are Blue. Crus Red.



What are the Southern Rhone Wines?

- The most famous crus are small.
- The famous reds are **Châteauneuf-du-Pape**, **Gigondas** & **Vacqueyras** made from blends featuring **Grenache**, **Syrah** & **Mourvedre**.
- **Beaumes des Venise** is famous mostly for **Muscat** dessert wines.
- **Tavel** is famous for Rose.
- Less expensive red and white blends are labeled as **Cotes-du-Rhone**.
- Small amounts of the best southern white are made in **Châteauneuf-du-Pape** from an often-complex blend.



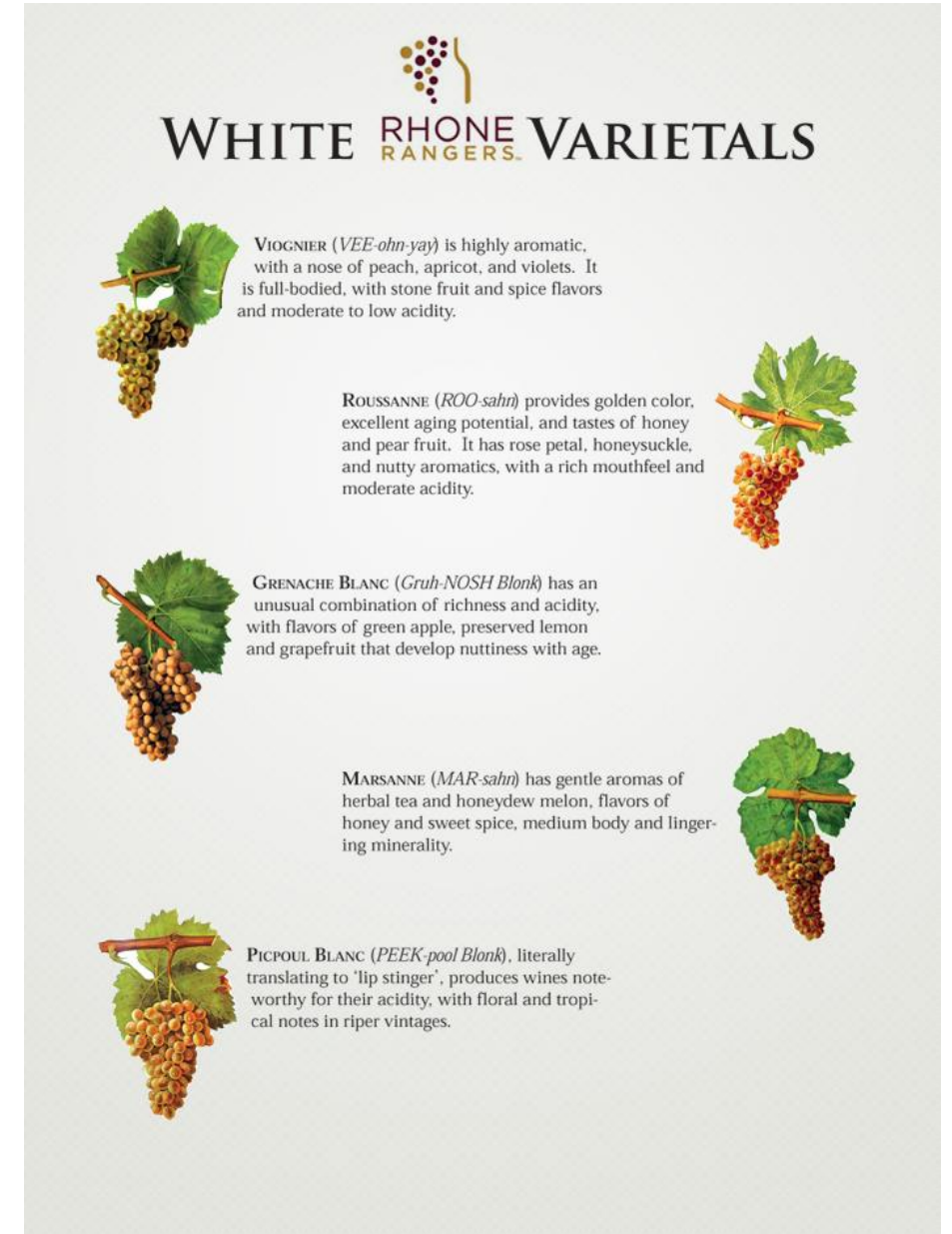
What are the Northern Rhone White Grapes and Wines?

- **Viognier** only is used in **Condrieu & Ch. Grillet**: It is highly aromatic with a nose of peach, apricots, and violets. It is full bodied with stone fruit and spice flavors and low acidity.
- **Marsanne** is usually the only grape in **Crozes-Hermitage, Hermitage, and St. Joseph**: It has gentle aromas of herbal tea and honeydew melon, flavors of honey and sweet spice, medium body, and lingering minerality.
- **Roussanne** is blended with **Marsanne** in **St. Peray** and sometimes in the **Hermitages**: It has golden color and tastes of honey and pear. It has rose petal, honeysuckle, and nutty aromatics with a rich mouthfeel and moderate acidity.



What are some of the Southern Rhone White Grapes?

- **Grenache Blanc** has an unusual combination of richness and acidity with flavors of green apple, preserved lemon, and grapefruit that develop nuttiness with age.
- **Roussanne** has golden color and tastes of honey and pear. It has rose petal, honeysuckle, and nutty aromatics with a rich mouthfeel and moderate acidity.
- **Piquepoul Blanc** literally translates to “lip stinger”. It produces wines noteworthy for their acidity with floral and tropical notes in riper vintages.



Characteristics of Condrieu (Viognier)

- 100% Viognier and moderately expensive (but Hermitage Blanc is pricier).
- The Viognier clone in Condrieu produces low yields of small berries and is less productive than clones planted in other regions of France.
- Often characterized by delicate aromatics of peaches, dried fruit and white flowers, and sometimes notes of anise, star fruit and melons.
- Full bodied and rich in a style that is texturally similarly to Chardonnay.
- Normally dry but the fruitiness and bouquet can suggest sweetness.
- The Viognier grape is naturally low in acidity which challenges growers and winemakers to keep the wine from becoming flabby and bleak.
- Some winemakers in the region use malolactic fermentation.
- The delicate flavors of the wine can be overwhelmed by too much oak.

What are the Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc grapes?

- **Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc** is usually always a blend of some or all of 9 grapes:
 - Clairette
 - Piquepoul Blanc
 - Picardan
 - Bourboulenc
 - Roussanne
 - Grenache Blanc
 - Grenache Gris
 - Piquepoul Gris
 - Clairette Rose
- Ch. Beaucastel makes a **Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc** from the first 5 grapes and an old vines reserve that is 100% **Roussanne**.



Characteristics of Châteauneuf-du-Pape Blanc

- White CdP production only accounts for around 5 percent of the total.
- Grenache Blanc & Roussanne provide fruitiness and fatness to the blend. Bourboulenc, Clairette & Piquepoul add acidity, floral and mineral notes.
- The style of these wines range from lean and minerally to oily and rich with a variety of aromas and flavor notes including almond, star fruit, anise, fennel, honeysuckle and peach.
- A single varietal, Roussanne, that is matured in oak barrels, is also made by some estates.
- Some white CdP are meant to be drunk young (2-4 years post vintage).
- Some close down 4-5 years post vintage and reemerge 7-8 years post vintage with exotic aromas and scents of orange peels. They can last 10-20 years post vintage.