



Ok, I admit it, I'm in Love!  
 She can be elegant, chic and sometimes petite but then sometimes big and a bit blowsy.  
 She is definitely vivacious and full of fun.  
 She can be withdrawn but nearly always bounces back and delivers.  
 For years she lived in a tiny region of France but now she travels the world.

She is.....  
**Voluptuous, Vivacious VIOGNIER**



Vedilhan Viognier

So yes I know, I am writing about a grape variety but then I am a Wine Merchant after all.

This may seem flippant but (sadly- ha ha) I am serious as some of the finest white wines in the world are made from this single white variety. With its amazing diversity of palate and aromas from peaches, nectarines and guavas to verbena, Seville orange and even white pepper there is a plethora of delights to be experienced.

It is staggering to think that less than 30 years ago there was only, according to renowned wine writer Jancis Robinson, 32 hectares (80 acres) of recorded plantings worldwide and most of it was in the Condrieu Appellation in Rhône Valley in France. The steep, terraced vineyards are very hard to work but I am pleased to report that now that planting has increased to around 170 hectares added to the thousands of hectares planted around the world.

You can find wines from around £7 per bottle

produced in large stainless steel tanks to wines costing over £60 that are fully fermented in oak casks with hand-picked grapes and nurtured like a new-born baby. Such is **Viognier's** character that it will soak up the minerality in the soil and climate it experiences which will influence both aroma and taste. The predominant 'perfume' is mostly apricots with honeysuckle and ripe peaches but May Blossom and musk are often there too. This can lead consumers to think the wines have been blended with other fragrant varieties but not always so.

The intensity and alcohol produced (wines are regularly over 13%) can make the drinker feel all but over-taken but in a good way. For many years it was mainly vinified sweet yet with age - could be 20 years! - it developed a deep, mineral filled richness that was all but dry on the palate. Today the style is mostly lighter and whilst still retaining the ripe peachy 'nose' there can be a palate full of stone-fruit that has bags of taste and leaves your taste-buds gagging for your glass to be filled up - you can't beat it in my book.



Viognier California grapes



Viognier Washington State grapes



Telhas Branco from Terra D'Alter



*Two wines made with 100% Viognier that have really impressed me recently are;*

**Domaine de Vedilhan Viognier, Pays d'Oc, France**

This is rich and round with lovely ripe tropical fruits and even a 'touch' of Turkish Delight (how good is that?) (£8.50 from George Hill Ltd).

**Telhas Branco 2012, Terras De Alter,**

Here we have a horse of a different colour. A real thoroughbred packed full of class and style. A nose of apricots and greengages with a toasty vanilla edge leads to a palate that carries from the aromas and having great 'grip', holding the taste that offers up rich fruit and showing a view to the future for this fantastic wine. **Peter Bright** is the winemaker and boy can he make wine. Watch out *Condrieu* he is after your tail! (£22.96 from George Hill Ltd).

Try this lady of wine, I am sure she will excite you like she does me.

Remember Wine Drinking should be FUN -  
*Andrew*

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"Do always remember to drink responsibly."

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