

CONDRIEU: TERRASSES DE L'EMPIRE

Style

Aromatic, dry white

Region

Northern Rhône

Producer

Christine Vernay.

Appellation

Condrieu, on the West Bank of the Northern Rhône.

Cépage

100% Viognier.

Tasting Note:

A textbook nose of acacia and honeysuckle is followed by a beautifully balanced palate of pears, white peaches and dried fruit with undertones of nuts and minerals with a subtle and seamless, dry finish.

Serve

On a summer terrace with a bowl of black olives or classically, with scallops or pike quenelles. Cleanly spiced Thai and Asian dishes can also work well with this versatile wine.

Cellarage

Best drunk when young within in its first 4-5 years.

Vinification

Hand-harvested grapes, from just under 5 hectares of 40 year-old vines (from the lieu-dits of Sainte Agathe and La Caille) are fermented at 16°-17°C in 20 hl oak barrels. Lees stirring takes place until the New Year when the wine is then transferred to steel vats prior to blending and bottling in the late Spring.

History

The Vernay name is synonymous with quality Viognier. Christine's father Georges (formerly president to the Condrieu growers' syndicat & who was born in 1926) was instrumental in keeping the Condrieu appellation from extinction in the 1960s when there were only 8 hectares left under vine! The Vernays have worked tirelessly to promote Viognier and are largely responsible for its current renaissance and newfound global popularity. Christine Vernay took over wine-making responsibilities here in 1997 and is assisted in the management of the estate by her husband Paul Amsellem. Today the Vernays farm 7.5 hectares of vines at Condrieu, which puts them in the top 3 growers in volume terms (alongside Cuilleron & Guigal).

The Chaillées d'Enfer name literally translates as the 'Terraces of Hell' and the Vernays first produced this wine in the 1992 vintage.

