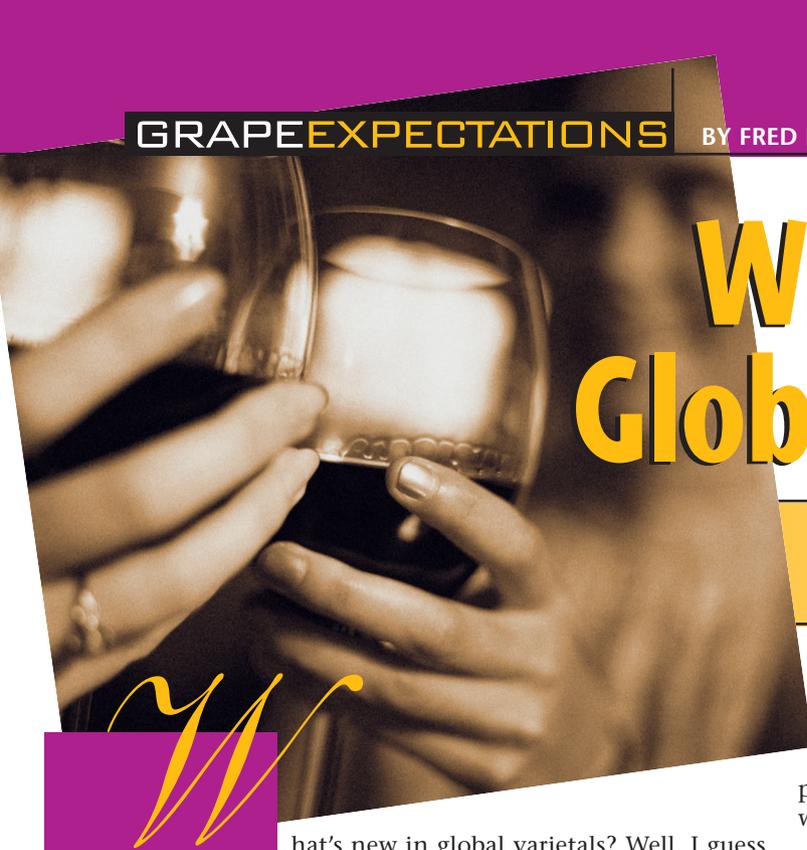


What's New in Global Varietals?

Introduce Guests to the World With Each Glass



What's new in global varietals? Well, I guess that depends on who you are and where you are. If you are just graduating from Coke or Pepsi or Dr. Pepper, maybe it's White Zinfandel Heaven, or if you're trading up from White Zinfandel, hey, it's a whole new world out there, and Chardonnay or Pinot Grigio just may be that next step. But for others who have the benefit of their White Zinfandel Doctorates or 3-D glasses, there have never been so many delicious choices worldwide.

The Planet of Possibilities

For those of us residing in the United States, it was actually pretty basic once you turned first base (White Zinfandel Lane) and were heading for second; it was Chardonnay on the white side and Cabernet Sauvignon on the red side. Then the California vintners figured out that not everybody wanted red wine with lots of wood, especially *para Las Mujeres*, and before you knew it everyone was talking about Merlot, because it was softer and a lot easier to drink without food.

Today, though, it's a whole new world no matter where you wake. On the California mainstream side, it's been Pinot Noir, Zinfandel, Sauvignon Blanc and then any number of other favorites (I really liked the Mirasou Petite Syrah during the '80s), but of course lots of Reserve everything. But watch California Syrah, Pinot Grigio replacing Chenin Blanc everywhere and a growing number of Bordeaux blends called Meritage.

France puts sparkle in our eyes with a million different versions of everything Champagne and sparkling, lots of Bordeaux and Burgundy for those willing to spend more and dessert wines with names that are not easily pronounced, but are unforgettable on the palate.

Spain has sent us cavas (the best values in sparkling wine) plus reserve red wines priced like California table wines and even "Mad Dogs & Englishmen;" Italy has shown us why

Tuscany, Veneto *et al* are destinations for wine and food; Portugal has taught us that Port is a marvelous drink with endless variations in addition to a holiday; and Germany has blow-dried its Rieslings to go better with food and prove that its high-end luxury wines are still an incredible way to consume mega carbs.

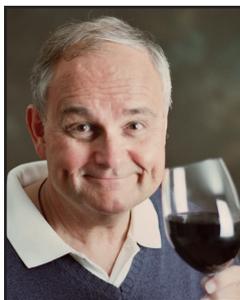
Chile has given us great values in Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Chardonnay, plus Reservas all the way. The hottest varietals from Chile will be Syrah or Shiraz (depending on the producer) and Carmenere (what was mostly sold in prior years as Merlot or blended with Merlot). Argentina is known for its Malbec, and that's not changing, but look for new varietals to take hold beyond it and Chardonnay, such as their Torrontes and Tempranillo or possibly Syrah and Johannisberg Riesling.

South Africa is producing great Chenin Blanc, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and now Shiraz; watch for them all to do well. New Zealand has given us Sauvignon Blanc and Pinot Noir, and now more and better of the same, plus Chardonnay, Bordeaux Blends and Riesling.

Australia really has diagnosed the American palate, and it continues to flood the U.S. market with millions of cases of super values at nearly every price point. So, watch for their Shiraz to continue as the top imported red varietal and their Chardonnay to be the top Australian white varietal to the United States. The Aussie Cabernet-Merlot, Cabernet-Shiraz and Semillon-Chardonnay blends will find more and more satisfied consumers at their very competitive price points as great value alternatives.

The best-selling Australian wine is Yellow Tail, but now you have Little Penguin, Jackaroo Big Red, Jindalee Shiraz and lots of others with fun names that point to the demystification of the wine trade in the United States. The reasons for Yellow Tail's tremendous success are that it is full of fruit, easy to drink, pairs well with our food, the labels are simple to understand and generally amusing and the value perception is very strong. **NCB**

There have never been so many delicious wine choices worldwide



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