
Weird and wonderful whites

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A Greek moschofilero from the [Troupis winery](#) in Mantinia (*tasting*) was one of the most enjoyable wines I found in my recent tasting of 88 ‘odd variety’ dry whites.

This variety is one of the most interesting native Greek grapes. I enjoyed several glasses with a meal of fish and vegetables. There was also a very good Santorini assyrtiko from a reliable producer, [Argyros](#) (*tasting*), but these wines are more of an acquired taste for Australians used to drinking whites with plenty of fruit.

Also impressive was a [Douloufakis](#) dry white from Crete, sub-branded Dafnios and made from the vidiano grape (*tasting*). This was a deeper coloured, fuller-bodied, powerful wine with prodigious palate length.

All three wines were imported by [Douglas Lamb Wines](#), which has become a Greek wine specialist in recent times.

I was also impressed by three Australian grüner veltliners, from [Lark Hill](#) (*tasting*), [Hahndorf Hill](#) (*tasting*) and [Pike & Joyce](#) (*tasting*). The

first two mentioned have been pioneers of this Austrian grape in Australia, while the Pike & Joyce is I believe their first. And a promising start.

Grüner is certainly proving a suitable variety in this country, especially in the Adelaide Hills. As a footnote, there was also a very good, inexpensive Austrian example, **Fred Loimer** 'Lois' 2014 (*tasting*), from the Niederosterreich region, imported by **Red + White**. Lovely.

Other oddball whites that excited me were **Tarrawarra Estate's** 2014 Roussanne Marsanne Viognier (*tasting*), a beautifully textured wine with savoury almond and smoky, leesy, nutty complexities. And **Levantine Hill's** M \acute{e} lange Traditionnel Blanc 2014 (*tasting*), which interestingly doesn't disclose the grape varieties anywhere on the bottle. Inquiries with winemaker Paul Bridgeman (ex-De Bortoli and ex-Yarra Yering) revealed it's a blend of sauvignon blanc (76%), semillon (21.5%) and viognier (2.5%), but you'd be hard pressed to pick the varieties.

Obviously, there's a strategy. The wine is priced at \$85, and while I have for some months now been scratching my head at the pricing policies of this and some other new start-ups in the Yarra Valley, I can't fault the quality. If the wine was labeled sauvignon blanc, semillon, viognier, there might be a serious limit to the price they could charge. But, if drinkers focus on the wine and not the grapes, shutting out any preconceived ideas about how such a blend should taste, they will be pleasantly surprised.

Barrel fermentation (by a mixture of wild and selected neutral yeasts) and maturation in a combination of large and small barrels, 20% of which were new, and lees-aging have added layers of flavour and texture to the wine. It is truly an excellent dry white wine. As for the price, it's a matter of how deep are your pockets.