# Laurent Miquel, Nord Sud Viognier 2005 Vin de Pays d'Oc

22 Apr 2006 by JR
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This producer, based at Ch Cazal Viel in St-Chinian is one of the most reliable and forward-looking in the Languedoc. They make a set of wines, mainly from Rhône grape varieties Syrah and Viognier, that really do answer what many of today's international consumers (and retailers) are looking for – value with a strong local accent – and have been rewarded with excellent distribution around the globe, as you can see here.

I have been following their various releases for many years now and am particularly taken by this, their superior Viognier bottling, from the successful 2005 vintage as it is drinking now. This is not a style of wine to stash away and think of drinking next year, or even necessarily at the end of this year. Drink it over the next few months to benefit from its entirely authentic honeysuckle and mayblossom flavours while there is also good freshness and attack there too. It is 13.5 per cent alcohol – not as heady as Viognier can get in parts of California, say – and an impressively long finish. To me, this does taste like baby Condrieu, unlike so many Languedoc Viogniers with their suspiciously ersatz aromas.

The Miquels have 26 ha of Viognier now, all planted within three kilometres of Cazal-Viel, and between five and 14 years old. The name of this bottling comes from the north-south orientation of the vine rows which is designed to protect the grapes from the burning effects of the midday sun. Almost a third of the juice, all free run, is barrel fermented but this is not an obviously oaked wine – as you would expect from the selling price of around £7 in the UK and $11 in the US. Brits can find it at £6.99 at both Tesco and Majestic.

I'd serve this wine either as an exotic aperitif or with the sort of zesty salad that does duty as either a first course or a summer lunch. I could imagine it pairing a combination of pear, walnuts and blue cheese rather well.

Here are the countries and importers who currently have this wine, I am assured:

- France
- Belgium
- US : *Kysela Pere et Fils, Winchester, Virginia ($12.99)*
- UK : *Majestic and Tesco (£6.99*)
- Ireland : *Dunnes Stores, Cassidy Wines*
- Sweden: *Johan Lidby Vinhandel, Stockholm*
- Holland: *Verbunt Wijnkopers, Tilburg*
- Germany: *Gourmandises de Louise, 77694 Kehl Auenheim*
- Canada : *LCBO 'Vintages' stores (Ontario), Freehouse Wines (British Columbia)*
- Japan : *Kyoji Yamada, BMO, Tokyo Japan*
- Switzerland: *Rutishauser, Scherzingen*
- *Australia : World Wine Estates, Sydney*

***James McNally, Lifford Wine Agency, Toronto adds:**
Thanks for the lovely review of the Laurent Miquel Viognier 2005. I just wanted to let your readers know that in the Canadian province of Ontario, our company is the agent for the wine, and although the LCBO (our government-controlled monopoly retailer) sometimes has it, consumers can obtain the wine by the case year-round from us directly. Thanks!
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