

Tasting With Julie Yonge  
Domaine Georges Michel

- Ron McFarland: We are going to visit with Julie from Domaine Georges Michel, and she is going to tell us a little bit about the three Golden Mile wines, Domaine Georges Michel Pinot, Chardonnay and Sauvignon Blanc. So let's start with the Pinot Noir, okay?
- Julie Yonge: This is the lighter of our two Pinot Noirs. It's goes into open fermenters for a week, and then it's raked off into two-year-old oak barrels for nine months. It's very fruit-intensive with a hint of smokiness to it. It's a light ... a fairly light Pinot Noir. It's designed pretty much as an easy drinking Pinot Noir, not necessarily as a food wine; very light ...
- Ron McFarland: Pretty nose.
- Julie Yonge: ... good barbecue wine, very fruity, hint of smokiness to it. When it is very hot in here, we can chill it down slightly and it handles it well.
- Ron McFarland: It would certainly go well with a lot foods.
- Julie Yonge: Yes.
- Ron McFarland: I think you could even serve this with white fish.
- Julie Yonge: You could, yeah, particularly with salmon.
- Ron McFarland: Yeah, salmon and halibut or swordfish
- Julie Yonge: With a slightly stronger fish, so it is ...
- Ron McFarland: So that's fantastic.
- Julie Yonge: ... very good.
- Ron McFarland: All right. We'll try the Golden Mile Chardonnay.
- Julie Yonge: The Chardonnay is a very fruit-driven in style Chardonnay. I have people saying, you know, in a blind tasting you might mistake it for a Sauvignon Blanc. You can definitely taste the Chardonnay fruit. It's very fruity on the nose, fruit salad almost; it's got a hit of spiciness to it, very well-balanced. It does go into oak after stainless fermentation. It goes into one- and two-year-old oak barrels; very, very well-balanced, well-structured; almost a Chardonnay for non-Chardonnay drinkers, actually.
- Ron McFarland: I think that's just because the quality of the fruit is not being dominated by the oak  
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Julie Yonge: That's right. Not one aspect is dominating, very superb balance. In fact, I don't know how the winemaker does it. Although not necessarily designed as food wine, it goes very well.

Ron McFarland: Most likely because the winemaker's a she?

Julie Yonge: Yeah, I think so (laughing). So it is a big theory there, isn't it, that they, the females have an advantage.

Ron McFarland: You're right, the elegance and balance and ...

Julie Yonge: ... have a much more delicate take on it.

Ron McFarland: Well, they appreciate it. And the other thing, I think, that I find with this Chardonnay is that the wine is meant to work with food, not be the food.

Julie Yonge: Exactly.

Ron McFarland: And because of that, it seems like this has a greater range of appeal because it will appeal.

Julie Yonge: It does go very well with the food, as well, and it's very, very nice to sit down, just have a glass after a day.

Ron McFarland: All right, we'll move on. This Sauvignon Blanc, I remember Georges telling me has a little bit of Semillion in it.

Julie Yonge: It does, it does, a very small amount. If it's under 15%, we don't have to label it as such.

Ron McFarland: Right.

Julie Yonge: But just a very small amount of semillion. As you know, it's a signature wine of this area, and I think this is an excellent example of a Marlborough Sauvignon. It's got all those qualities: very fruity; you're getting the lovely pineapple passion fruit; gooseberry flavors; it's got that lovely, zesty zinginess to it.

Ron McFarland: We'll have a taste.

Julie Yonge: Very, very, very good example of a Marlborough Sauvignon Blanc. I get excellent feedback from people that come in the cellar door.

Ron McFarland: The other thing that I hear or another thing that I hear often is, people really appreciate how well this tastes 18 months and even 2 years out.

Julie Yonge: Well, it's interesting you should say that. I mean, people say, "How long should we keep Sauvignon?" The rule of thumb is perhaps two years. But we opened a Golden Mile Sauvignon from 2004 the other day, and it was as fresh as it was; it could have been made the last year.

Ron McFarland: It's a compliment to that winemaker --

Julie Yonge: Absolutely, Absolutely.

Ron McFarland: -- and to the vineyard manager out there. All right. Well, those are three wines and ...