

LEVEL 2 • C10

Chardonnay: the shape-shifter

HOST PURCHASE + PREP SHEET

Use this before class. Bottle examples are teaching targets, not endorsements or stock guarantees. Check the current label and producer information; substitute by style when necessary.

What to buy

- Best option: reuse the C09 pair later today or tomorrow, while both wines remain fresh.
- Sample A target: leaner Chardonnay with little obvious oak influence.
- Sample B target: broader Chardonnay with documented oak influence. Match vintage, price, alcohol, and serving temperature when practical.

Possible A/B choices

- Sample A places to shop: Chablis or a current stainless-steel California Chardonnay. Current leads checked 30 August 2026: Maison Louis Jadot Chablis; J. Lohr Paperwhite Unoaked Chardonnay.
- Sample B places to shop: broader Burgundy or California. Current leads checked 30 August 2026: J. Lohr Riverstone Chardonnay; J. Lohr Arroyo Vista Chardonnay.
- Strong controlled pair when the current releases remain suitable: J. Lohr Paperwhite and J. Lohr Riverstone from Arroyo Seco. They share producer, appellation, and vintage while documenting different cellar settings.
- Examples are leads, not guarantees or stock promises. Recheck the current vintage and producer technical information before class. Region or label alone cannot prove vessel, lees, malolactic conversion, diacetyl, or oak treatment.

AI WINE-CHOICE CHECK

Photograph this sheet and the front and back labels of each candidate bottle. Ask: *Using this class sheet, classify each bottle as Sample A, Sample B, neither, or uncertain. Cite visible label evidence and current producer technical information. Compare region, vintage, alcohol, sweetness, oak or production details, and price where relevant. State what evidence is missing; do not infer style from region alone. Recommend the best A and B pair and explain why.*

Teach before you pour

- Chardonnay is the base track, not a blank one: climate and ripeness can change its acidity, fruit direction, and body before cellar choices begin.
- Alcoholic fermentation: yeast turns grape sugar into alcohol and carbon dioxide. Vessel is a separate control; stainless steel, concrete, neutral wood, and barrels differ.
- Lees are post-fermentation sediment, especially spent yeast cells and grape solids. Lees contact may affect texture and integration; contact is not the same as stirring.
- Malolactic conversion: bacteria can turn sharper malic acid into softer lactic acid. Diacetyl may suggest butter or butterscotch, but butter is neither required nor proof.
- Oak is a bank of settings: species, size, age, toast, time, and fermentation versus ageing all matter. Controls overlap, so sensory observations suggest possible causes; only current producer information can confirm them.
- Chablis is Chardonnay from northern Burgundy, not another grape. Broader Burgundy and California contain many styles; place guides shopping but does not prove a production recipe.

Set up

- Serve both at the same cool temperature in 1 oz pours; hide labels as A and B; write privately before discussion.
- Photograph this sheet plus the front and back labels of candidate bottles for the AI check below.
- Invite friends and use a big screen if you like, but complete the lesson before social refills. Keep leftovers cold and reuse later today or tomorrow.
- Do not claim oak, lees treatment, or malolactic conversion without current producer documentation.

Host checklist

☐	Purchase or select samples
☐	Code and chill / temper samples
☐	Print one worksheet per participant
☐	Teach or read the primer before pouring or pressing play
☐	Set water, food, and spit cups
☐	Start the lesson before social refills

Hosting and reuse. Big-screen groups: seat everyone where they can pause and write; discuss after private notes and finish class work before refills. Reused bottles: close tightly, refrigerate, use later today or tomorrow, and replace if tired or oxidized. Updated 30 August 2026.