

# UBC researchers to sequence Chardonnay genome

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The University of British Columbia's Wine Research Centre has launched an international collaboration with the Australian Wine Research Institute to sequence the Chardonnay grape genome.

In the first initiative of its kind, a multidisciplinary team of Canadian and Australian scientists will explore the genomics of the world's most planted grape variety, red or white.

Considered to be the principal international white wine standard, Chardonnay is Australia's dominant white variety and is the second most planted white variety in British Columbia. However, not many wineries know the type they have planted.

"Despite its popularity, not much is known about the Chardonnay [genome](#)," says project co-lead Prof. Hennie van Vuuren, director of the UBC Wine Research Centre at the Faculty of Land and Food Systems. "Our goal is to help wineries identify their Chardonnay varieties so they can plant the most appropriate type for their climate, leading to improved quality of wine."

The researchers will examine 15 different varieties of the Chardonnay grape, looking at their distinct properties such as early or late ripening, loose or small bunch sizes and seedless or large berries.

"We're delighted to have secured this partnership with UBC for the benefit of Australian grape and wine producers," says Managing

Director Dan Johnson of the Adelaide-based Australian Wine Research Institute (AWRI). “Assembly of the Chardonnay genome will produce a foundational data resource that will underpin many such projects and, with time, will assist in developing practical game changing strategies for the growing of this variety.”

Johnson adds, “Our work will benefit from the development of linkages with other groups working on grapevine sequencing initiatives for other varieties.”

Also heading the project are Prof. Joerg Bohlmann from the UBC Michael Smith Laboratories and Prof. Sakkie Pretorius at the University of South Australia.

To date, the initiative has received a total of \$585,000 from funders that include Genome British Columbia, UBC, the UBC [Wine](#) Research Centre, Bioplatforms Australia Ltd. and the AWRI.

Provided by University of British Columbia

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