Title
A Quality Price Ratio Comparison of Willamette Valley Chardonnay and White Burgundy

I want to submit an abstract for:
Conference Presentation

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Keywords
Willamette Valley Chardonnay, white Burgundy, Quality Price Ratio, Wine Prices

Research Question
Does Willamette Valley Chardonnay represent a better value than white Burgundy?

Methods
Internet search, Data compilation and analysis, descriptive statistics

Results
For wines costing more than $21, Willamette Valley Chardonnay is a better value than white Burgundy based on the data collected

Abstract
Chevonne Ball who moderated the Chardonnay Celebration Seminar in Newberg, Oregon, in February 2023 asserted “the price and the getting of French Chardonnay is so high that it is less expensive for people in the UK and in Asia to get Oregon Chardonnay...so people are buying it because it’s less expensive but also because it’s delicious.” Jason Lett, proprietor and winemaker at The Eyrie Vineyards noted “You will find that old Oregon Chardonnay drinks extremely well. The pre-mox epidemic that struck white Burgundy [beginning] in the 90s never came to Oregon. If you love older white Burgundy, then you'll find many incredible bargains by picking up old Oregon Chardonnay at auctions and cellar sales.” In a March 2022 posting entitled Oregon fills the gap (https://www.jancisrobinson.com/articles/oregon-fills-gap), Jancis Robinson stated “the quality of Oregon’s Chardonnays, convincing answers to white burgundy, has been rising fast and A&B [Vintners, a major English importer of Oregon wines] are selling more and more Chardonnay as well.” These observations suggest that Willamette Valley Chardonnay represents more bang for the buck compared to white Burgundy. The purpose of this presentation is to offer data and analyses that largely substantiate the claims.

Starting with a list of producers of Willamette Valley Chardonnay (https://www.willamettewines.com/wineries-and-vineyards/?view=list&sort=rankAlpha&filter_amenities_100%5B0%5D=varieties_chardonnay), the average price and average rating of 269 distinct bottlings were compiled from wine-searcher.com during the middle of December 2023. For comparison, the same data for 269 white Burgundies, all Chardonnay, were collected from the same source during the same time period for a selection of producers in appellations known primarily for whites plus producers with a presence in the Willamette Valley and those whose wine I purchase. For each wine, the quality price ratio (QPR) was calculated by dividing the average rating by the average price.
The minimum and maximum average prices of the Willamette Valley Chardonnays are $16 and $241 with mean, median, and mode of $51.77, $43.00, and $40 and a standard deviation of $32.38. The minimum and maximum average ratings are 80 and 96 with mean, median, and mode of 90.07, 90, and 91 and standard deviation of 2.36. The minimum and maximum QPR are 0.3900 and 5.3750 with mean, median, and mode of 2.1981, 2.0930, and 2.3421 and a standard deviation of 0.9558. The least expensive wine is a Duck Pond Cellars Chardonnay with an average price of $16, an average rating of 86, and a QPR of 5.3750, the highest of the sample. Antica Terra Coriolis Chardonnay with an average price of $51 below the mean and has an average rating of 88 and a QPR of 1.7255. The most expensive is the 00 Richard Hermann Cuvée with an average price of $241, an average rating of 94, and a QPR of 0.3900, the lowest of the sample.

The minimum and maximum average prices of the white Burgundies are $8.00 and $13,948 with mean, median, and mode of $347.02, $84.00, and $42.00 and a standard deviation of $1,412.85. The minimum and maximum average ratings are 82 and 96 with mean, median, and mode of 89.50, 89, and 89 and standard deviation of 2.53. The minimum and maximum QPR are 0.0068 and 10.7500 with mean, median, and mode of 1.5566, 1.0787, and 2.0000 and a standard deviation of 1.4249. The least expensive wine is a Domaine Gueguen Bourgogne Cotes d'Auxerre Chardonnay with an average price of $8.00, an average rating of 86, and a QPR of 10.7500, the highest of the sample. Domaine des Comtes Lafon Meursault Clos de la Barre sits just below the mean with an average price of $343, an average rating of 91, and a QPR of 0.2653. The most expensive, with an average price of $13,948, is Domaine de la Romanee-Conti Batard-Montrachet Grand Cru which has an average rating of 95 and a QPR of 0.0068, the lowest of the sample.

While the three least expensive white Burgundies cost less than any of the Willamette Valley Chardonnays and boast QPRs of 6.0714, 8.00, and 10.7500, the latter dominates in its range of average price. This is evident in two ways, first, by plotting the average price against QPR and fitting with curves that are, of course, nearly hyperbolas. The equation for the Willamette Valley Chardonnay is QPR=79.835x^(-0.968) and for the white Burgundy, QPR=81.329x^(-0.979) where x is the average price. For x > 5.395222249, the QPRs of the Willamette Valley Chardonnay exceeds that of the white Burgundy. But this result is based on smoothing the data.

A second approach considers the means the QPRs of the wines costing less than $250 which encompasses all of the Willamette Valley Chardonnays and eliminates the highest priced, lowest QPR white Burgundies thus reducing its sample size from 269 to 231. For wines with an average price of $21 or less, the mean of the QPRs for the Willamette Valley Chardonnays is 4.6129 and for the white Burgundies, 5.4081. For those with an average price greater than $21, the mean of the QPRs for the Willamette Valley Chardonnays is 2.0655 and 1.5214 for the white Burgundies. So overall based on these samples, the Willamette Valley Chardonnays represent a better value than the white Burgundies for wines with an average price above $21.

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