



2014 Napa Valley White Wine

This wine is our conception of a mythical "ideal" wine...a California wine with a spiritual connection to Friuli, Italy, but also drawing inspiration from the great whites of the Loire, Burgundy, Graves, Alsace, the Rhone, old-school Napa and Sonoma...actually the list of great whites we are inspired by goes on and on, and it is all wrapped up in this wine. This wine is an attempt at getting at the core of what white wine is all about, the archetypal "white wine," thus the name. It's a very intentional blend of four varieties from two vineyards.

The 2014 blend is roughly 50 percent Sauvignon blanc, 25 percent Ribolla gialla, 20 percent Semillon, and 5 percent Tocai friulano.

The Sauvignon blanc brings a clean fresh citrusy acidity and some tropical character. The Ribolla gialla brings seashell minerality, nuttiness, and structure to the blend. The Semillon contributes viscosity and waxiness that adds gravity and weight. The Tocai friulano adds spicy aromatic notes. The acidity and fruit expression is balanced by a rich lees character and a faint backdrop of creamy oak. There is interplay in the wine between lightness and richness, and focus and complexity.

The 2014 White Wine has more spice and mineral qualities than it has in years. The rainy spring set the stage for spicy flavors, while the extremely dry yet mild growing season held those flavors as the fruit developed. Flavors include the trademark white peach, kafir lime, lychee nut, beeswax, ripe fig, and pineapple, but with much more prominent stones, oyster shells, and freshly baled straw.

The fruit was very lightly whole-cluster-pressed. All four varieties were co-fermented in 20% new Boutes barrels, and aged on its lees, with no stirring, until bottling (often we stir a bit to help the wine flesh out, but this vintage didn't need any more weight—we wanted to maintain freshness). To preserve all of the acidity the wine was prevented from going through malo-lactic fermentation. After ten months of barrel aging, the wine was filtered to prevent further malolactic fermentation, and then bottled.

The pH is 3.17, the TA is 7.0, and the alcohol is 12.5%. 1337 cases produced.

The Vineyards

The two vineyards are both in the cool and foggy southern part of the Napa Valley.

The Sauvignon blanc and Semillon come from Ryans Vineyard, which sits on a streak of alluvial gravel in the center of the valley floor, south part of Napa. It is right in the path of the daily wind current that pulls up through the valley from the San Francisco Bay towards Calistoga. Native grasses are planted under the vines to compete for moisture and nutrients and encourage the roots to forage down deep in the gravelly soil.

The Ribolla gialla and Tocai friulano are from the tiny Vare Vineyard, in the mouth of Napa's Dry Creek canyon, right next to the creek. The rocky fluvial soil and cool air drainage of the canyon work perfectly with the variety. Ribolla gialla is an extremely old variety cultivated since medieval times in the Collio region of Italy and Slovenia.