



2005 Ribolla Gialla, Sulle Bucce, Vare Vineyard

This particular wine is one of the very first "orange" wines made in California. But the intention was very different than to make a crunchy, food-friendly orange wine; instead the goal was to start a journey that would reveal something profound.

In 2005 George Vare filled a barrel with whole Ribolla Gialla grapes, let it ferment, and then aged the wine in that barrel, fully on those same grape skins, for 12 months. He then pressed it and continued aging the wine in a smaller half barrel. When he passed away, his wife Elsa gifted the barrel to Steve and Jill, and they continued aging it, outdoors at ambient temperatures, for what has now been a total of 15 years. Over that time it has concentrated and transformed into a deep and complex rancio wine.

There was no fining or filtering, no sulfites added at any time, and only native yeasts were used in the fermentation. The pH is 3.5, the TA is 5.5 g/l, and the alcohol is 18.5%. Only 192 half bottles were produced.

The wine has picked up the character of the barrel and of the many years, in some ways it is more like a whiskey than a wine, this is a wine for sipping and contemplating. We chose to bottle the wine with a bar top so small portions can be poured, to enjoy alone with a good book or to share with different friends. The wine can be opened and closed many times over a few months without going bad, it is already fully oxidized and transformed into its stable final form.

This Sulle Bucce is an homage to George Vare, a dear friend and a true visionary.

The Vineyard:

The Vare vineyard is in the cool and foggy southern part of the Napa Valley. It sits 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. George Vare was given a few sticks of the budwood from Josko Gravner in 2001 and grafted it into his vineyard. It was the first Ribolla Gialla in North America. Steve started overseeing the vineyard in 2002, helping to further propagate the vines, and falling in love with the variety in the process.

George passed away, and the vineyard is now owned by Gary and Cynthia Bengier, who have continued the legacy of Ribolla Gialla. Steve still oversees the Organic Farming of the vineyard, and besides the fruit that Matthiasson uses, Steve also sells the fruit to different winemakers such as Arnot Roberts and Massican.