



2005 Napa Valley White Wine

N
O
S
S
O
N
M
A
T
T
H
I
A
S
S
O
N

This wine is a new-world conception of a mythical old-world wine...a California wine that connects Graves, France to Friuli, Italy.

The wine is a blend of Sauvignon blanc, Semillon, and Ribolla gialla. The Sauvignon blanc grapes were picked very early, preserving their fresh acidity and minerality. The Semillon was picked late, bringing ripeness to the blend. The wine was barrel-fermented, and left on its lees, with occasional stirring, until bottling—never racked. The intense acidity and fruit expression is balanced by the rich lees character and the sweet oak. There is interplay in the wine between flint, pineapple, grapefruit, brown spices, nuts, and cream. The Ribolla gialla adds a spicy component and a supple tannic grip that ties the wine together and brings another dimension of length and interest.

The wine was barrel fermented in 100% new French Boutes barrels. It went part of the way through natural malolactic fermentation. After nine months of elevage, sur lees, the wine was filtered, to prevent further malolactic fermentation, and then bottled. 75% Sauvignon blanc, 20% Semillon, and 5% Ribolla gialla. 45 cases were made (two barrels).

The Vineyards

The three vineyards are all in the cool southern Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley.

The Sauvignon blanc comes from Ryans Vineyard, which sits on a streak of gravel in the center of the valley floor. It is right in the path of the daily wind current that pulls up through the valley from the San Francisco Bay up to Calistoga. California 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 strong Sauvignon Blanc (“white savage”) vines work hard to make intense flavors, and the cool breezy afternoons and evenings preserve the intense acidity.

The Semillon is from the gravelly Oro Puro vineyard above Milliken Creek on the east side of the Silverado Trail. The vineyard makes a late harvest wine, so we hand-picked the “healthiest” clusters, ones that were not contracting the “noble rot” necessary for the late harvest wine, but with the intense Semillon ripeness and character that we needed to balance the extreme acidity of the Sauvignon blanc.

The Ribolla gialla is from Elsa's Vineyard, in the mouth of the Dry Creek canyon. Ribolla gialla is a 13th century variety from the Collio region of Italy and Slovenia. It is the indigenous grape of Friuli, and it is a passion that we share with our friends George and Elsa Vare, who introduced us to the variety. This is the only Ribolla that we know of in California, and grown here the wine has the Friulian character of toasted nuts and pure minerality, but in a pouch of California spun gold.