



2008 Napa Valley White Wine

This wine is our new-world conception of a mythical ideal old-world wine...a California wine with a spiritual connection to Friuli, Italy and Graves, France.

The wine is a blend of 47 percent Sauvignon blanc, 31 percent Ribolla gialla, 19 percent Semillon, and 3 percent Tocai friulano.

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

The fruit was very lightly whole-cluster-pressed. All four varieties were co-fermented in 30% new Boutes barrels, and left on its lees, with occasional stirring, until bottling, never racked—to prevent losing aromas to oxygen. Four of the twelve barrels went through spontaneous malolactic fermentation. After nine months of elevage, sur lees, the wine was filtered, to prevent further malolactic fermentation, and then bottled. The pH is 3.32, the TA is 6.34, and the alcohol is 13.4%. 290 cases were made.

The Vineyards

The three vineyards are all in the cool southern part of the Napa Valley.

The Sauvignon blanc comes from Ryans Vineyard, which sits on a streak of alluvial 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 towards 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 Ribolla gialla and Tocai friulano are from the tiny Elsa's 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.

The Semillon is from 60 or 70 plus year old vines in the Yount Mill Vineyard in Yountville. They are head trained and dry farmed, and are so stressed and virused that when the berries are at full ripeness, hanging golden and amber in the sun, the sugar is typically only at 20 brix, helping to naturally keep the alcohol moderate while lending incredible viscosity to the wine.