



2020 Napa Valley Ribolla Gialla, Bengier Vineyard

The last time we made this wine as a separate bottling was back in 2016. This fruit typically all goes into our Napa Valley White Wine blend (since 2005), but occasionally we get a generous enough crop of fruit to also bottle some by itself, as a single vineyard/single variety wine.

Ribolla gialla originates in the Friuli region of Italy and across the border in Slovenia. Its earliest known mention was in the Pope's paperwork managing a dispute between the Bishop of Trieste and a monastery in Venezia in 1296. Back then it would have been skin-fermented like a red wine, and we do that too with our Matthiasson Vineyard estate-grown fruit, but this wine was made in a "modern" method (the past few hundred years) of pressing the fruit and fermenting the juice separately in barrels.

The wine is 100 percent from the Bengier Vineyard.

The wine is pure slate and minerals. There is no fruitiness at all, instead there is a sense of clean cold stone. The texture has the tannic structure that Ribolla is known for, and that makes it so great with food. It is the perfect oyster wine, but also great with salads as well as rich pork or chicken dishes.

The fruit was very lightly whole-cluster-pressed and then barrel fermented in completely neutral barrels. It was aged on its lees, with no stirring, until bottling. 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 3.47, the TA is 6.2, and the alcohol is 12.5%. 347 cases produced.

The Vineyard

The Bengier 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. 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, the only difference being that the vineyard is now farmed organically. Steve still oversees the farming for the owners and sells fruit to Arnot Roberts and Massican as well.