



2021 Napa Valley Pinot Meunier, Yount Mill Vineyard

While having dinner with the Hoxey family some years back (the Hoxeys own the historic organically-farmed Yount Mill Vineyard) we overheard a discussion of Pinot Meunier. It was planted for sparkling wine. We kicked each other under the table and immediately asked Andy Hoxey if we could please purchase some fruit. Still (non-sparkling) red wine made from Pinot Meunier is rare and can make very earthy wine with a beautiful strawberry note when grown in France. What would it taste like in Napa? As lovers of the wonderful diversity of grape varieties we needed to find out. Turns out it is delicious grown here, still earthy but also fruity, even more so than the French versions (surprise, surprise). However, it maintains minerality and that cooling quality that is wonderful about that variety. We made the wine in 2015 assuming it would be a one-off, but it was such a hit that we decided to do it again in 2018, 2020, and now again in 2021. It is becoming an old friend.

The Pinot Meunier is truly earthy and mineral, a prized characteristic here in sunny Napa, where the wines normally run fruitier, but it has tantalizing blue fruits as well, and a refreshing bright backbone of acidity and lively structure.

The wine was fermented with 50% whole clusters in a small open top tank, with two manual punch downs per day. We pressed after 14 days and aged the wine in neutral puncheons for eight months before bottling unfinned and unfiltered.

The pH is 3.57, the TA is 6.25 g/l, and the alcohol clocks in at only 11.5%. 207 cases were made.

The Vineyard

The Yount Mill Vineyard was one of the first certified organic vineyards in Napa Valley—they never stopped farming organically back in the post-war period when folks started using the new-fangled chemicals. Located in deep soil near the Napa River, the vines are mostly dry-farmed, and tended with minimal intervention—they are allowed to grow a little wild. The cool winds are drawn up the valley over the vineyard, allowing white grapes to maintain their vibrant freshness.