



2016 Napa Valley White Wine

This wine is our conception of a mythical "ideal" wine...a California wine with a spiritual connection to Friuli, Italy, but also drawing inspiration from the great whites of the Loire, Burgundy, Graves, Alsace, the Rhone, old-school Napa and Sonoma...actually the list of great whites we are inspired by goes on and on, and it is all wrapped up in this wine. This wine is an attempt at getting at the core of what white wine is all about, the archetypal "white wine," thus the name. It's a very intentional blend of four varieties from two vineyards.

The blend is roughly 50 percent Sauvignon blanc, 25 percent Ribolla gialla, 20 percent Semillon, and 5 percent Tocai friulano.

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

The 2016 White Wine has its trademark spice and mineral quality, and despite the warm year the wine is back to its trademark acidity and freshness. This was partly the result of more leaf cover in the vineyard, and partly due to earlier harvesting. Trademark flavors include white peach, kaffir lime, lychee nut, beeswax, ripe fig, and pineapple, with prominent wet stones, oyster shells, and freshly baled straw.

The fruit was very lightly whole-cluster-pressed. All four varieties were blended immediately upon dryness, racked and returned onto the lees for aging until bottling. As always we used 20% new Boutes barrels, with no stirring. 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. Intended to age, the White Wine is held in bottle for at least a year before release, but will reward much longer aging.

The pH is 3.27, the TA is 6.8, and the alcohol is 12.1%. 179 cases produced.

The Vineyards

The two vineyards are both in the cool and foggy southern part of the Napa Valley.

The Sauvignon blanc and Semillon come from Ryans Vineyard, which sits on a streak of alluvial gravel in the center of the valley floor, south part of Napa. It is right in the path of the daily wind current that pulls up through the valley from the San Francisco Bay towards Calistoga. 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 Vare 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.