Las Jaras Wines

2023 "CÉZANNE" CHENIN BLANC

Norgard Vineyard on the Talmage Bench | Mendocino County

Our Chenin Blanc is named after Joel's daughter Cézanne, who – like this wine – has a big personality. We have always been obsessed with white wines that have savory and saline notes. Cézanne is that: fresh minerality dazzles the palate and then savory notes begin to shine through the gorgeously long finish. Typically, people look for wooly or linalool notes in California Chenin Blanc, but we wanted to achieve a flavor profile on par with our favorite mineral-laden Chenin Blancs from the Loire Valley.

The aromatics express crushed rock, toasted hazelnut, and lime skin while the palate is taut and builds through the attack revealing layer upon layer of mineral, quince, pippin apple, and lime. Enjoy the balance and textural sensations: roundness, minerality, and acidity. This wine is very refreshing and drinks quickly — make sure to allow time for the wine to open up before finishing the bottle!

Enjoy this wine alongside dishes with bright flavors and fresh textures: fish tacos, oysters, salads, and grilled foods are all perfect partners.

Vineyard
The grapes for this wine come from Norgard Vineyard, which was planted in 1980 and is set up with a quadrilateral cordon system that was popular in those days. It is one of the few vineyards in the area that we source from that is irrigated. The vineyard is situated on a northwest slope on the east side of the Ukiah Valley. The soils are the famed pinole series, which is well drained and moderates vigor. The vineyard is finally organically for us at our direction. The berries on the cluster are very small, which gives us intense flavors.

Winemaking
It seems that the most critical elements to make a Chenin Blanc in the style that we are after include: complete fermentation, plenty of acid, and no oxidation or oxidized aromas. Everybody says they pick their grapes at the perfect time, but to us that means picking as soon as the fruit has a hint of ripe flavor, which in this case is at about 19 brix. We picked the block in two passes six days apart. The second pass was from a weaker section to the east and ended up coming in only slightly riper than the rest of the block. In making this wine we always want to protect the wine from oxygen to avoid the "forward" aromas of wet wool or linalool. We whole-cluster pressed the grapes as soon as they got into the winery and avoided skin contact. We pressed to a stainless-steel tank, added 10ppm sulfur and settled at cellar temp for 24 hours. The hard press wine was kept separate and not added back. After this period, we racked the juice with the light lees to another tank and warmed it up to initiate fermentation naturally. Once the fermentation started to tick, we transferred the juice to three concrete eggs and new and used Stockinger 600L demi muids along with 15% of the volume in new Stockinger 228L barrels. We refrained from adding anything further except a small amount of sulfur in the months near the bottling date. We did not fine or filter this wine.

This wine will continue to age very well for the next several years if kept at a consistent cool temperature. The cork we chose allows the wine to age without "breathing."

Label Art by John Zabawa

Production: 320 cases | ABV: 12.87% | TA: 6.79 g/L | pH: 3.27 | VA: 0.54 g/L | DCO2: 1121 ppm
Total SO2: 41 ppm | RS: 1.1 g/L | Turbidity at bottling: 4.9 NTU