

Las Jaras Wines

2020 "CÉZANNE" MEDOCINO COUNTY CHENIN BLANC

Norgard Vineyard on the Talmage Bench

Our Chenin Blanc is named after Joel's five-year-old 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 type of wine: its minerality sparkles on the tip of your tongue, then, as the wine evolves in your mouth, you get these tantalizing savory notes that stick with you through the long finish. Typically, people look for wooly or linalool notes in California Chenin Blanc, but that is not the flavor profile that we are after. We put this wine on par with our favorite Chenins from the Loire Valley.

Cézanne opens up with a nose of wet stones, brioche, and toasted almond. The palate is taut and builds through the mid-palate to show layer upon layer of quince, pippin apple, and apricot. The wine has a very long finish filled with mineral and acid touches that make you salivate for more. A very balanced wine, but what sticks out the most are textural sensations: roundness, mineral, and acid. Discovering all the various aromas and flavors is like a treasure hunt. This wine drinks very quickly because it is so refreshing. Make sure to allow the wine to open up a bit before consuming it all!

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

Vineyard

The grapes for this wine come from the 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 conventionally farmed and is going to be farmed for us with only organic-approved products as of 2022. 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 are: complete fermentation, plenty of acid but not sharp, 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 was at about 19 brix. We also wanted to protect the wine from oxygen enough so it did not create 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 two concrete eggs and new and used Stockinger 600L demi-muids and one 800L barrel from Schneckleitner. and a used puncheon for fermentation. 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."

Production: 521 cases | ABV: 11.5% | TA: 5.72 g/L | pH: 3.31 | VA: 0.55 g/L | DCO2: 1020 ppm
Total SO2: 41 ppm | RS: 0.65 g/L | Turbidity at bottling: 13 NTU

