



Appellation: Mendocino
Varietal Blend: 100% Sauvignon Blanc (Certified Organic)
Production: 40 Barrels
Winemaker: Matthew Rorick & Spencer Graham

Winemaker's Notes

Intensely fragrant, offering aromas of grapefruit and lemon rind, pear blossom, lavender and gooseberry. Crisp acidity braces the palate and provides the structure for flavors of starfruit, white peach and citrus with the vineyard's hallmark hint of slate and fresh-cut grass which provide an intriguing counterpoint. The wine's body builds to a creamy fullness on the mid-palate without losing its focus, and flavors remain vibrant and complex through the finish.

Vintage

For the second year in a row we had a wet spring and a cooler than average growing season – until a two week heat wave struck in mid-summer. Thankfully, the Sauvignon Blanc had not yet gone through the phase of growth called veraison, during which the skins soften and the fruit becomes much more vulnerable to extreme heat. This allowed our 2006 vintage to retain all of the crisp natural acidity that is characteristic of Sauvignon Blanc, and we were able to harvest these grapes at the perfect balance of ripeness and structure during the second week of September.

Winemaking

The grapes for our 2006 Sauvignon Blanc were handled in much the same fashion as those in 2005: after harvest, the fruit was allowed to macerate for several hours in the press. This closely monitored process allowed the juice to extract aromatics and phenols from the gently broken skins, adding to the wine's intensity and complexity. Once pressed, we chose to cold ferment the juice in stainless steel in order to showcase the lovely varietal character produced in the vineyard. After fermentation, lees contact was maintained in order to enhance the wine's fullness of body and round out the palate.

Norma Gibson's Vineyard in Mendocino

Grapes for Elizabeth Spencer Sauvignon Blanc come from organic vineyards in Mendocino County owned by Norma Gibson. These 30-year old vineyards were planted by an Italian family who owned the property since the early 1900's. In 1985, Norma purchased the ranch, totaling 40-acres. Planted to Sauvignon Blanc and Zinfandel, the vineyards are in an ideal

agricultural zone with sustainable farms bordering on each side. This area is full of wildlife including deer, jack rabbits, bobcat, bats, owls and many types of birds. The farm is also home to two horses and four dogs. Norma and her family grow peaches, persimmons, pomegranates, apples, and organic vegetables for their own use in addition to their commercial crop of wine grapes.

Norma Gibson's vineyards sit on a clearly defined bench to the east of Ukiah with a western exposure. During the growing season, the vineyards receive constant sunlight from the first morning light until night falls. Vines are planted north to south with a spacing of 11 feet by 7 feet and are cane pruned.

Organic

These vineyards have been farmed organically for the last eight years and officially certified as organic since 2003 through California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF). The back label on our Elizabeth Spencer Mendocino Sauvignon Blanc carries the official CCOF seal which is the guarantee that the grapes were grown to the standards set by the National Organic Program.

No pesticides have been used on the Gibson vineyards. Norma and her husband, Morgan, farm the ranch themselves; they hire an outside crew to help with pruning, suckering and hand picking during harvest. The vineyards are seeded with an organic ground cover that is a mixture of oats, bell beans, peas and other vegetation that later tilled into the soil for added nutrients. Each year up to 90 tons of organic compost is applied to the soil promoting balance in the vines and in the fruit. Weed control is done through mowing where the rows are wide enough to accommodate a tractor or through hand labor using a weed-eater. Organic methods require an intense attention to detail and contribute to uniform ripening and consistency. Ultimately, these practices yield an all around healthy crop with great purity and expression of flavor. Mendocino County has the highest percentage of organic vineyards of any other appellation in the United States with more than 18% of the vineyards certified as organic.