



Elizabeth Spencer™

2006 Chenin Blanc Mendocino

Appellation: Mendocino
Varietal Blend: 100% Chenin Blanc
Production: 10 Barrels
Winemakers: Spencer Graham

Winemaker's Notes

Delicate pale straw in color. Inviting aromas build and develop as the wine opens up with notes of apricot, nectarine and wet slate evolving to ripe pear and freshly cut straw. On the palate, this wine exhibits lovely citrus flavors and broadens to a generous mid-palate of melon and a suggestion of tangerine. A delightful crisp, clean finish with refreshing sweet and tart flavors provide the perfect thirst-quenching footnote. Natural high acidity will help this wine age well, and while it is delicious upon release, we look forward to tasting this Chenin Blanc for many years to come.

Winemaking

Our 2006 Chenin Blanc was harvested by hand in late September, and was then pressed in whole-clusters and fermented in stainless steel. Temperatures during fermentation were kept as low as possible in order to preserve freshness and the more delicate aromas. Following fermentation, the wine was aged for a short time "*sur lies*" in tank in order to broaden the mid-palate and add complexity. The term "*sur lies*" refers to the method of leaving the wine on the sedimentary matter that remains in barrel after fermentation is complete. *Sur lies* aging adds complexing qualities to the wine often akin to a roasted grain character. The wine was bottled in April of 2007.

Vineyards

The Chenin Blanc is selected from a 30-year old vineyard block with a northwestern exposure in Mendocino County. This subtle orientation away from the direct sun allowed our Chenin Blanc to avoid overheating in the late afternoon which in turn allows the fruit to build complexity while retaining the natural acidity and distinctively elegant aromatics that are a hallmark of the variety. This underappreciated Loire grape variety is considered by many winemakers to be the most versatile of all grapes. It traditionally produces crisp and dry wines. Chenin Blanc is resistant to many vine diseases and has excellent vine vigor. It can be grown in warm climates which are usually too warm for many vinifera types and it can be grown in many different soil types. Typically the vines yield a consistent five to eight tons per acres.

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. Chenin Blanc buds early and ripens late, so the atypically hot weather came during a stage of grape development that, thankfully, had no ill effect on the quality of the grapes. Following this period of hot weather, temperatures eventually cooled and the Chenin Blanc continued to develop in an ideal slow fashion with even ripening. This vintage of Chenin Blanc possesses all of the very desirable bright acidity and complex aromas that are the product of a cool growing season.