



2008 Viognier

Vintage Summary

The 2008 growing season began with an early bud break (early March) due to the extremely warm spring temperatures. Fluctuating temperatures included heat spikes, wind, and an unusual spring frost that plagued the Paso Robles area. A cool start to summer segued into consistent warm temperatures. The early bud break, combined with lowered yields from frost and a warm finish to summer created an early harvest for our Chardonnay. The fruit was harvested August 29th, 2008.

Vineyard Practices

The 2008 Viognier was sourced from a hillside vineyard on the west side of Paso Robles. Located in the cool, ocean influenced Templeton gap, the soils are rich in limestone. These unique soils help maintain acidity and allow picking dates to be determined on flavors. Aggressive pruning helps focus the plants stored carbohydrates on promoting strong early growth in shoots. When shoots reach around 6 to 8 inches, we remove any growth not intentionally left at pruning. The intense canopy of the Viognier allowed us to be very precise with the amount of sunlight intentionally left to penetrate the clusters. Skilled crews hand pulled leaves and laterals to allow fractional light into the canopy. At verasion, any clusters with green or pea size berries were removed to retain even maturity throughout the vineyard .One week before harvest, a skilled crew was sent through the block to remove leaves in the fruiting zone, allowing the sun to slightly brown the skins and soften the sometimes harsh tannins of Viognier.

Winemaking Practices

Our winemaking team began sampling the ripening grapes on a regular basis at the end of July. During the last few weeks before the grapes were picked, we tasted the skins, juice and seeds two to three times per week. We evaluated flavor, sugar, pH and Total Acidity to determine the exact harvest date.

A skilled crew handpicked the grapes into ½ ton picking bins. All our Viognier is whole cluster pressed with the heavier press fractioned off into a separate tank. We inoculated the Viognier with M2 yeast, a strain used for its inherent stone fruit characteristics. After inoculation, the juice was barreled down into 100% Neutral French oak for barrel fermentation. Fermentations were temperature-controlled at 55 degrees Fahrenheit. After fermentation ceased, the wine was aged “sur lies” in barrel, and stirred weekly during its 4 month ageing process. Neutral oak and the short ageing period were used to ensure this aromatic variety truly expresses itself. To retain its acidity and stone fruit characteristic, the wine did not undergo malolactic fermentation. The final blend was put together January 11th and bottled January 29th.

Tasting Notes

The 2008 Viognier is very clean in appearance, with a light straw color and transparent rim. An inviting peaches and cream nose with a hint of apricot and orange marmalade fill the glass. Rich and fleshy entry to palate, floral aromas upon tasting brighten the fruit. Ripe and flavorful with sweet fruit on the mid palate. Clean, long, unmarked by oak, and refreshing with grilled fish, steamed lobster, scallops, or prawns.

Technical Information

Barrel aging:	4 months in 225-L oak barrels, 100% neutral	Barrel replacement:	20-30% annually on average
Blended:	1/11/ 2009	Racking:	None
Harvest dates:	8/29/ 2008	Fining:	None
Brix at Harvest:	26.1	Filtering:	Sterile
Harvest method:	100% hand-harvested	Bottled:	January 29th, 2009
Fermentation:	12 days with UV 43	Total Acidity:	.79g/100ml
pH:	3.15	Barrels:	Allier, Nevers
Alcohol:	14.5%	Yeasts:	M2
Malolactic fermentation:	None		
Suggested Retail Price	\$22.50		