



2007 SAUVIGNON BLANC, ESTATE GROWN

Santa Rita Hills

Winemaker Notes:

This is my 23rd Sauvignon Blanc. For years I have described in these notes my progression of events with regard to this variety. I'll re-condense it here as best I can. I started out bottling small amounts of estate grown wines. They were very expressive, and at times I felt they were too grassy for their own good. Then, for a good 10 years or so, the answer was to source fruit from warmer climates and blend. This led to a Sauvignon Blanc program that many of you will remember called Eleven Oaks. Some of my best praise came out of that program with one wine aficionado proclaiming, 'This is the best Sauvignon Blanc in the western hemisphere!' As those purchased grapes became more expensive, and more of my colleagues started pinning circa \$25 price tags on their Sauvignon Blancs, I began to realize could not continue making large quantities of the stuff. Fortunately, I had made the discovery that allowed me to turn back to my own ranch, utilizing 100% estate grown fruit. That discovery was the affect of the sun.

When direct sunlight makes contact with a grape cluster, it helps it to ripen. With most varieties, you can go too far. The downside is that you either cook out some of the grape's more attractive flavors, or you destroy the fruit altogether as it turns into raisins. It's not hard to understand; if you spend too much time at the beach working on that beautiful coca tan, you get burned. What's interesting about our Sauvignon Blanc is that it's really hard to burn. If I don't farm the vine's canopy wide open and let the clusters hang directly in the sun all season long, then the wine crosses over that fine line from intense, stunning beauty, to a freakish scent of greenery that some in the media might call artichoke or jalapeño. Either way, the veg doesn't sell. And for good reason, it's too weird.

I like this wine. I think it's in an interesting place. I am not going to go into a long discussion concerning my theory about whether wine is art or not. Suffice it to say, I feel that it is not art; it's craft. But to make things a little more confusing, I will say that some wines are more *artistic* than others. I believe this is one of those wines, and the interesting place that it's in is somewhere between the more immediate beauty of last year's wine and an interesting streak of forestry greenness that, if more amplified, would restrict its attractiveness.

Under my terroir-motivated attraction to this wine; the fact that it's such a strong expression of soil and climate, lies my simple, subjective attraction. Juniper berry, kiwi, lime and sandalwood all come together to bestow a hypnotic vermouthe-like nose. Yes, there is a tinge of fresh snapped pea. But I have a bad allergy to legumes, and I still think it's pretty. If this wine were from a good producer in Sancerre, the press would be talking about its minerality for days. It is a bit more slender than last year's wine. Without the introduction of any malolactic fermentation in 2007, this wine has more of an edgy, razor sharp mouth feel.

And so it is, my Sauvignon Blanc has turned away from the mainstream. Like David Bowie returning to the pulsating energy of the *Spiders From Mars*, my Sauvignon Blanc has returned to its intense, nervy roots. In David Bowie's case, he'd have to put the makeup back on. In my case, I've taken it off.

Cheers, Bryan

Technical Notes:

VARIETAL COMPOSITION: 96% Sauvignon Blanc, Babcock Estate, Sta. Rita Hills
4% Chardonnay, Loma Verde Vineyard, Los Alamos Valley

FERMENTATION: 100% cool stainless steel fermentation

pH: 3.30 TA: 6.9 g/L RESIDUAL SUGAR: Dry ALCOHOL: 14.5%

BOTTLING DATE: February, 2008 RELEASE DATE: March, 2008

PRODUCTION: 677 cases 12/750ml SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICE: \$22.50