

LADERA

Napa Valley

Wine: 2009 Howell Mountain Sauvignon Blanc

Blend: 100% Sauvignon Blanc, 100% Howell Mountain

Vineyard Notes: The Ladera Sauvignon Blanc is planted in a very cool area of the Estate vineyards on Howell Mountain. It was planted in this spot because we like the crisp acidity, freshness and heightened aromatics that are inherent in cool temperature sites and it was too cold to ripen Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot or Petite Verdot in these blocks.

Sauvignon Blanc is delicious as a grape and our goal is to preserve as much of the grape quality in the wine as is possible. To do this, we need cool growing conditions, especially during the early part of harvest when Sauvignon Blanc is picked.

Cellar Notes: The harvest of Sauvignon Blanc started the Ladera harvest in 2009, with the first day on August 31 and finishing on September 11. The season was ideal for the resulting wine. This blend is a combination of 58% Sauvignon Blanc, Liparita selection, 32% Sauvignon Blanc, clone #1 and 10% Sauvignon Musque clone. The grapes were picked at a fairly low sugar, averaging 23.5, with total acidity of 7.2g/L.

The grapes were whole cluster pressed immediately after picking, while berries were still cold. The juice was cold settled overnight and then racked to a combination of new barrels (11%), neutral barrels (5%) and stainless steel barrels (84%). The new barrels added a small amount of toasty complexity. The neutral barrels give barrel fermentation character without overwhelming the wine with new wood. The stainless barrels preserve the vibrant fresh fruit aromas but still give the wine the lush mouth feel from aging with the lees. The wine was cold fermented for two weeks and aged on the lees for 5 months. 965 cases were bottled on March 16, 2010.

Winemaker Notes: This wine is brilliant to the eye with its beautiful golden hue and crystal clean edges. The inclusion of the Sauvignon Musque, a unique clone of Sauvignon Blanc, adds the tropical fruit and melon characteristics to the wine.

Howell Mountain is a cool site and the character of this wine tends toward the flavors of a cool climate wine. There are green apple, pear, grassy and melon aromas, along with the hints of vanilla from the lees contact and the small amount of new barrels. The Ladera Sauvignon Blanc palate is most characterized by the crisp acidity and the mouthwatering texture. The low alcohol also contributes to a perfectly balanced wine that pairs well with a variety of fish, cheeses, fresh summer vegetables and spicy cuisine.



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