

2004 PETER FRANUS CARNEROS SAUVIGNON BLANC



Vineyard: Stewart Vineyard
Composition: 100% Sauvignon Blanc, Musque Clone
Harvest Date: August 27, 2004
Fermentation: 32 days at 49°
Oak aging: Neutral oak, 3 months
Bottling Date: March 10, 2005
Production: 564 cases

One of the things I love about this wine is the reaction it evokes from those who didn't even know I produced a Sauvignon Blanc. On a recent trip to Ohio, the wine buyer for a stylish French-Vietnamese restaurant put a glass aside so he could smell it all day long. Once the Stewart Dairy, this vineyard has provided me with delightful Sauvignon since 1999, capturing elements from the various regions of the world with a unique and elusive character that keeps on bringing you back for another look, sniff, and taste. In that ever changing market, Sauvignon Blanc is "happening."

We did a few things differently in 2003 in terms of winemaking that made that vintage our most successful to date, namely a colder fermentation and utilization of a yeast strain known to enhance aromatics. But if I could have changed one thing, it would have been to harvest the grapes slightly earlier. And that we did in 2004, just before the heat wave hit. The result is what I would call a livelier and racier wine.

Grapes were whole-clustered pressed without crushing, and juice fermented in a stainless steel tank for roughly a month. Aging followed for three months in completely neutral puncheons—500 liter or 132 gallon barrels—that added a creamy texture without the introduction of any new wood flavors.

The forward nose once again offers ginger and lemongrass, citrus peel, a hint of mint, and a touch of freshly cut grass on a cool, damp summer morning in Nebraska. Minerality and acidity provide the structure to keep the wine in balance and allow it to be a great accompaniment to food.

I thought as I tasted, one of the prettiest and most refreshing versions of this wine that I have produced. Time to get in the kitchen!