

## 2012 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY CHENIN BLANC



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| Vineyard:      | Losey Vineyard                         |
| Composition:   | 100% Chenin Blanc                      |
| Harvest Date:  | September 14, 2012                     |
| Fermentation:  | 21 days at 50°                         |
| Aging:         | 55% Stainless Steel<br>45% Neutral Oak |
| Bottling Date: | April 10, 2013                         |
| Production:    | 108 cases      750ml                   |

The first wine I ever produced as an “official” winemaker was a 1981 Chenin Blanc at Mount Veeder Winery. Yes, it was estate fruit grown on the property and a testament to the pioneering spirit of the day. The wine was both magnificent and memorable with an intensity of flavors that left a big impression with me. Thirty years later, I decided it was time to bring some attention to one of the world’s most noble wine grapes.

I love the wines from the Loire Valley in France—Cabernet Franc, Sauvignon Blanc, and of course Chenin Blanc, probably the most recognized and famous of which is Vouvray. Chenin has grown in the region for hundreds of years, and curiously enough, for centuries as well in South Africa.

Growers Jim Fore and Doug Hill who manage the Stewart Vineyard for me in Carneros, also maintain an interesting plot of land in south Napa which like Carneros, is also on the cooler side. A few years ago, I gave them the green light to graft a small number of vines to Chenin.

In 2012, sunshine and a warm dry spring gave way to mild and ideal growing conditions through the summer. Not only did this result in high quality grapes, but an abundant supply as well. It was a welcome relief to this veteran winemaker who has experienced more than 30 harvests in Napa Valley. It was a fantastic looking vintage to receive our first few tons of Chenin Blanc.

I treated our Chenin Blanc in a similar fashion as our Albariño and Sauvignon Blanc. Whole-cluster pressing gently releases the juice that ferments in stainless steel with a yeast selected to accentuate the fruitiness and wonderful aromatics of the grape. After fermentation, a portion continues to age in stainless steel barrels as well as old neutral French oak barrels to add some texture and richness.

Vibrant in appearance, the 2012 offers the slightest hint of gold. The perfumed aromas are intriguing and classic Chenin—apple, peach, honey, with a hint of ginger and pineapple. Appropriate acidity wakes up the palate and leads to a refreshing mineral grip that extends to the great texture of the wine. I am reminded of an old television ad for a tonic that speaks volumes—“curiously refreshing!”

Just prior to bottling this wine earlier in the year, I had the pleasure to taste with the buyer from one of the most exclusive shops in London. He was the first in line to pre-order the first three cases—speaks volumes I think for a most unique wine from Napa Valley!