

2008 PETER FRANUS CARNEROS SAUVIGNON BLANC



Vineyard:	Stewart Vineyard Truchard Vineyard
Composition:	100% Sauvignon Blanc Musque Clone
Harvest Date:	September 4 & 24, 2008
Fermentation:	40 days at 49°
Oak aging:	Neutral barrels 3 ½ months
Bottling Date:	February 10, 2009
Production:	942 cases

As you enter Napa Valley from the south, you are in Carneros, driving on the highway that runs right through the old Stewart Dairy property. To your left on the hill are the famous “Oreo” cows, and to your right are the ten-year-old Sauvignon Blanc vines that are frankly becoming pretty famous. All those variables—wind, restrictive soil, clone, temperature, as well as the unknowns—have an effect on the grapes, resulting in wines with tropical, mineral, and elusive notes most reminiscent of France’s Loire Valley.

In 2007, I received the very first Sauvignon Blanc from Truchard Vineyards, and continue to enthusiastically work with their fruit. Harvested nearly three weeks later than the Stewart in 2008, it offers another dimension and layer of complexity that lifts the overall sauvignon blend.

We continue to follow the winemaking strategy that began in 2003. Grapes arrive and proceed to the press without any crushing, and the resulting juice ferments in stainless steel for roughly a month. We selected a different yeast strain for each lot, both known to enhance the aromatics of the wine. Aging takes place for three months in completely neutral puncheons—500 liter or 132 gallon barrels. The sur-lie aging adds a surprising textural component. The raciness is balanced by the creaminess of the barrel aging. A reminder, however, there is no new oak. The goal is to preserve the wonderful fresh fruit quality of the wine.

As successful as our 2007 Sauvignon Blanc was—one publication listed it # 24 in the top 100 wines of 2008—I would have to say I am drawn even more to the 2008. It’s a little more forward and just seems to offer a slightly higher level of excitement.

This is a wine we never tire of drinking. It goes with so many of the foods we enjoy, elevating the pleasure of a meal. Very light straw in color with the slightest hint of green, the forward nose offers a profusion of aromas reminiscent of Thai cuisine—ginger, mint, lime, lemongrass—as well as melon, peach, and fresh hay. There is an edge of acidity, essential to fine Sauvignon Blanc, but it is always kept surprisingly in check by the richness of the mouth. In the bottle for only a month as I write these notes, I am already surprised by its exuberance.

Peter Franus has developed quite a reputation for extolling the concept of “delicious!” Need I say anything more?