



CARNEROS SAUVIGNON BLANC
2003

VINEYARDS: Stewart Vineyard

COMPOSITION: 100% Sauvignon Blanc, Musque Clone

HARVEST DATE: September 16, 2003

FERMENTATION: 28 days at 49°

OAK AGING: Neutral oak, 3 months

BOTTLING DATE: March 23, 2004

PRODUCTION: 590 cases - 750ml

Anyone who has tasted with me over the years knows my enthusiasm for the Sauvignon from this vineyard. Its stylish and exotic character distinguish it from its French, New Zealand, and even its California counterparts with an identity all its own, seeming to capture elements from numerous regions. The wind, temperature, restrictive soils, clone, and cultural practices of growers Jim Fore and Doug Hill result in a raw product that I can't wait to get my hands on each year.

And this is a special year, not only because of the new package, but after four previous vintages under my belt, I was able to fine tune my winemaking in a way that has given me what I think is clearly the most distinctive expression of this vineyard so far. Except for the September heat spikes, the growing season was relatively cool, and as a result, the heightened Sauvignon character was a great starting point.

Grapes were whole-clustered pressed without crushing, and juice fermented at a cool temperature with a yeast strain selected for its ability to enhance aromatics. Aging for a short period of time aging in completely neutral puncheons added a creamy texture without sacrificing any of the freshness. I am pleased that in 2003, these little enhancements put all the pieces together.

The forward nose offers a profusion of ginger, lemongrass, guava, "island fruits" as well as a hint of mint and orange peel. The minerally and lively acidity hold that voluptuousness in check. There is a richness not typically seen in Sauvignon Blancs, but it has certainly become a hallmark of this vineyard.

Let the sassy personality of this wine serve as an introduction to the wonderful wines that will emerge from the 2003 vintage.