

2013 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY CHENIN BLANC



Vineyards:	Losey Vineyard
Composition:	100% Chenin Blanc
Harvest Date:	September 13, 2013
Fermentation:	15 days at 50°
Oak aging:	75% Stainless Steel 25% Neutral Oak
Bottling Date:	March 10, 2014
Production:	194 cases

TA 0.65 g/100 ml

pH 3.54

Alc. 14.2%

RS 0.80 g/L

CALIFORNIA RETAIL PRICE \$24

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.

After the marvelous 2012 vintage, we were rewarded again in 2013, with a nearly perfect growing season. A warm dry spring got the vines off to an early start and also set an excellent crop. That early start translated into an early harvest as well, beginning with our Sauvignon Blanc and Albariño on August 29, followed a couple of weeks later with our Chenin.

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.

Very pale straw in color, our 2013 offers a racier version than the more opulent 2012. Once again classic perfumed aromas of Chenin shine through—apple, peach, honey, and mineral held in check by a lively and firm structure. Refreshing is a character I seek in all my wines, but I can offer no better example than this one to confirm that goal.

I am pleased to be part of a movement that is giving recognition to grape varieties that deserve a little more attention.