

2023 PETER FRANUS LAKE COUNTY GRENACHE BLANC



Vineyard: Cobb Mountain
Red Hills Lake County

Composition: 100% Grenache Blanc

Harvest Date: October 10, 2023

Fermentation: 15 days at 50°
QA 23 Yeast

Aging: 100% Stainless Steel

Bottling Date: March 5, 2024

Production: 98 cases

TA 0.71 g/100 ml

pH 3.24

Alc. 14.1%

RS 0.33 g/L

In my wine career I've made Gewurztraminer, Chenin Blanc, Sauvignon Blanc, Chardonnay, and Albariño. Why not something else to nurture my wine curiosity? Jim Fore's Cobb Mountain Vineyard in Red Hills Lake County has provided me with stunning fruit over the years, and Jim offered me some Grenache Blanc for the 2023 harvest. Of course, I could not say no!

Grenache Blanc (or Garnacha Blanca) originated in Spain and is now found primarily in the Rhône Valley of France as well as northeast Spain. It is a component of the Châteauneuf-du-Pape white blends. The wine typically displays an array of mineral and fruit aromas with plump juicy flavors and crisp acidity. In some ways for me it seems to capture some of the best attributes of both Chardonnay and Chenin Blanc, two of my favorite varieties when done correctly. It offers a nice change of pace!

Jim Fore's vineyard is a spectacular property, situated at 3000 feet elevation. Soils are thin in the Red Hills and drain instantly. The elevation places vines well above the hot summer heat trapped in the valleys below, and aligns them in the path of cool westerly Pacific breezes. At the same time, there is paradoxically greater solar intensity that has some inexplicable effect on the grapes. Because of the high elevation, the differential between day and night time temperatures is dramatic, resulting in intensely flavored grapes.

I treated our Grenache Blanc in a similar fashion as 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 aromatics of the grape. After fermentation the wine remains in stainless steel barrels to preserve its freshness and fruitiness.

Some are calling 2023 "the vintage of the century!" Here comes the first of ours to be bottled.

As for the wine. The color suggests a slight tinge of gold while aromas of white peach, lime zest, sweet basil, and floral notes emerge from the glass. The wine is full-bodied and lush, held in check by vibrant and refreshing acidity. Flavors suggest ripe pear with a touch of herbaceousness. I call this a "cerebral wine" in that it engages you and makes you think! It intrigues and keeps bringing you back for another look.

Grenache Blanc—welcome to the PF portfolio!