

2011 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY ALBARIÑO



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| Vineyard: | Stewart Vineyard |
| Composition: | 100% Albariño |
| Harvest Date: | September 21, 2011 |
| Fermentation: | 25 days at 49°, VL3 Yeast |
| Aging: | Stainless steel exclusively |
| Bottling Date: | February 22, 2012 |
| Production: | 180 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 munching grass, and to your right is the vineyard. The unique terroir of this site has provided me with stunning Sauvignon Blanc since 1999, wonderful Merlot more recently, and for the first time in 2009, Albariño.

One of my favorite American authors, Kurt Vonnegut, once said that life is a series of accidents. As a result of unanticipated developments at harvest in 2009, there was no home for the Albariño grown on the property, and suddenly it was being offered to me. Did I have to think about it? Of course not! Considering that aromatic whites are among my most favorite wines, I could hardly say no. Although not the first Albariño planting in the United States, Stewart was the source of the first commercial release of the variety in 1999.

Albariño has grown on the northwest coast of Spain and Portugal for centuries, resulting in wonderful food-friendly wines known for their enticing aromatics, vivacious crispness, and intriguing complexity. If ever a wine begs for food, this is it. It has gained in popularity in the States in the last few years, and for us to have one of the few domestic versions produced in this country is both exciting and noteworthy.

2011 was a complicated vintage. A cool wet spring diminished crop levels in many vineyards and late ripening vineyards were problematic. On the other hand, cool conditions allowed wonderful flavor development with ripeness achieved at lower sugar levels, and if you were one of the fortunate ones, you ended up with a bevy of beautiful wines.

Our 2009 Albariño was enormously successful—there was no 2010 because of adverse weather—but I felt I could notch it up and create a purer and more exciting version. Aquí lo tiene. Light straw in color, aromas of grapefruit, orange blossom, green apple and marzipan leap from the glass. Razor-like acidity and mineral/stone-fruit flavors expand on the palate, lingering well into the finish. If this wine were tossed into a tasting of its highly regarded Spanish counterparts, I am confident we would surprise.

Unfortunately there is a miniscule quantity of this wine, and I wish we had more to share! It is already making an appearance on some of the top restaurant lists both in the States and internationally, and continues to impress each time it is presented.

If you are looking for a distinctive and unique wine from Napa Valley, this is it.