



2023 CHENIN BLANC

TASTING NOTES

This Chenin Blanc has a lot going on in the nose foreground – mild lemon, pineapple, quince, grapefruit, apricot – but also, far in the background of the scene, the scent of aromatic hillside scrub that the French call “garrigue”. Altogether it’s an intoxicating aroma. The mouth is bold and vivid, as you’d expect from Chenin’s typically vibrant acidity. The character of the flavors in the mouth tends more towards green than the yellows of the nose – kiwi, tart pear and herbs – and it’s more about richness than citrus, with loads of complexity. Crisp/Dry; crisp citrus/green apple; dry/full body, pale straw color, medium ++ acidity.

WINEMAKER’S NOTES

This Chenin Blanc is made in the classic Chinon style – very crisp and dry with loads of green fruit flavors. There aren’t a lot of vineyards growing Chenin Blanc in Washington, but we found a great one in the Yakima Valley on the slopes of the Rattlesnake Hills. Often it’s the early-ripening varieties that are the most challenging in terms of picking the right harvest date, but Chenin – always the last of our whites – presents its own challenges, at least in our growing region. As it approaches ideal ripeness, the vines start to shut down, with the ripest berries suddenly transitioning from perfect healthy green to rapidly shriveling tan – which doesn’t wreck the wine, but causes dramatic changes in the sugar and acid content of the juice, making for challenging winemaking. This wine has considerably higher acid than anything else we make, which was initially nerve-wracking, but it has been a huge hit from the first vintage.

Composition

100% Chenin Blanc

Appellation

Yakima Valley

Vineyard

Roza Hills

Harvest Date

September 15, 2023

Harvest specs

23.4 brix, pH 3.38, TA 8.4 g/l

Crush Pad

Whole cluster press

Yeast

Allegro AL-48

Fermentation

Tank fermented

Malolactic Fermentation

None

Aging

5 months in tanks

Oak

None

Fining/Filtration

Bentonite/cross-flow filtration

Alcohol

13.7%

Production

229 cases

Bottled

February 7, 2024



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PAIRINGS

The higher acidity in this wine makes it perfect for your tough-to-pair or strongly-flavored foods like pesto, goat cheese, smoked salmon, dressed salads – and anything else you can think of! Seriously. Our staff recommends it with such diverse offerings as oysters (especially oysters!), broccoli mac & cheese, garlic thin crust pizza with spinach – and did we mention oysters? – also fish tacos...the list goes on and on. Perfect for potluck dinners!

VINTAGE DETAILS

The 2023 vintage got off to a late, cool start, but then raced ahead with warm temperatures, making up ground throughout the growing season and even tracking slightly ahead of average by mid-July. A brief heat spike in August caused issues in some varieties but didn't slow down the speeding train of ripening. Harvest started off with a fury, bringing home one variety after another day after day. Yields were widely variable, and things were changing so quickly that yield forecasts sometimes turned out to be significantly higher or lower than expected when the grapes were harvested. This means that we got more of some varieties than expected, and less of others. The good news is that the quality was very good in nearly everything, so we are expecting some great wines from the vintage.

GRAPE VARIETY INFO

Chenin is a lesser known variety in the U.S., but its fans are passionate, to say the least. It is famous in its native France where it is grown predominantly in the Loire river valley. It has higher acidity than most varieties, which gives it the versatility to be made into sparkling and dessert styles, as well as a crisp, food-friendly dry table wine. In fact, it's probably the most versatile wine we make in terms of food pairing – you can throw almost anything at this wine and it says “yum, thank you!”

AWARDS

Gold, SavorNW Wine Awards (91pts)

FUN FACTS

2019 was our first vintage of Chenin. It is vinified (that's a fancy word for “made into wine”) in a huge range of styles. Hails from France but over 50% of global acreage today is in South Africa. Before the California Chardonnay boom of the '70's, Chenin Blanc was the most widely planted white grape in that state.



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