



2005 Old Vine Sauvignon Blanc

What is an “old vine” and why bother? Old vines are those which have been growing in the same vineyard for at least 30 years. This isn't my definition, it was prepared and agreed upon by the Paris based, International Organization of Wine and Vine (OIV) for use in the labeling of wines from France's Burgundy appellation. Vines take about 8-10 years to mature and then begin to decline in their ability to produce large quantities of fruit after 20-25 years. The old vines that have 30+ years will have a greater chance of producing a wine with that delicious sense of “somewhere” that is the memorable reward of a great wine. These wines transcend taste by offering something that is akin to the tone of a memorable voice. Not perfect by any means, but filled with beauty, character and resonance.

As the vines continue to age, special care must be taken to preserve their “voice” and health. Typically, the vines will work harder to regenerate new wood each year after pruning and progressively less fruit will result. The clusters and berries will both be smaller and less numerous. While the crop may be light, the harvest date actually comes earlier. This means that the vine produces more flavor in these smaller grapes with less alcohol as a result in the wines.

Yes, more work is given to these vines for less fruit in return. But these old vines are like people in some ways. As they age they produce less and require more care, but the fruit of their labor is memorable and full of character. We hope that you will find the same traits in our “Old Vine” selected bottling.

The 32-year old, dry-farmed vines that inspired this dedicated bottling are located in the Varozza Vineyard of St. Helena. The age and small, flavorful clusters permit us to produce an unusually refined expression of Sauvignon Blanc in an old-world style. Following harvest, the grapes are whole-cluster pressed, settled overnight and barrel fermented at cool temperatures. After the slow fermentation process, the barrels are then stirred on winter and early spring lees to enhance texture and aromas but prevent malolactic fermentation. In late spring, the wine is racked to tank and chilled prior to bottling. No fining or filtration was needed.

What does all this mean in the glass?

The 2005 vintage produced an elegant and beautifully balanced wine. In spite of its relatively low alcohol, the texture is unusually soft and rounded. The aromas carry bruised pear and vanilla cream with the strongest impression being that of quince. Flavors are as promised by the aromas; mineral, bruised pear and quince with notes of cream in the finish. This is a classic bottling inspired by vines and wines of a different era.



Appellation: Napa Valley

Varietals: 100% Sauvignon Blanc

Aging: Fermented and ages in barrels for 6 months

Alcohol: 12.7%

pH: 3.29

TA: .66

Release Date: December 1, 2006

Cases: 218 cases