

BUTTONWOOD

Overview

A wine for all seasons, but we call it "Summer in a Glass" for its crisp, floral, orchard fruit character!

In the Vineyard

We grafted this small block from Merlot in 2008, and have been amazed at its progress in the vineyard. It loves the rocky alluvial soils and the undulating long rows where our one+-acre block of Grenache Blanc merrily marches between two of its Rhonish cousins – Grenache (Noir) and Syrah (our block for Rosé). This is the third vintage of Grenache Blanc, and we all continue to be astounded at the crop. It seems that Vineyard Manager Armando Zepeda spends half his time thinning the crop, so that we eventually end up with about one cluster per shoot. The vines are cane pruned early in the year and then crop balanced right after veraison. The clusters get bigger, so Armando responds by clipping of the wings and shoulders of each cluster. Even so, and with a difficult vintage and some vines still recovering from a deadly frost in 2008, this little block returned 2 tons to that one acre. It takes a lot of work to keep these vines in a happy, balanced state – the canopy must partially shade them from the morning sun, but leave enough exposure to both ripen the clusters and keep airflow through the canopy. All this attention from the vineyard crew is rewarded, as the vines respond with beautiful balance and flavor in the (large) beautiful clusters!

The Vintage

"Challenging" is the nicest adjective that comes to mind. The growing season began with good growth that was then hit by three nights of extremely cold temperatures. With no inversion, this "frost" did not sink, and therefore our protective fans were unable to move this cold air away from the vines. The second growth produced a much reduced crop, which then struggled to ripen with a much colder than normal summer. Not done with us yet, Mother Nature then sent a series of rainstorms in mid October, more cool weather, and then more rain the first part of November. Grenache Blanc was a champ through all this, but we figured enough was enough and harvested our 2 tons of grapes on November 3, 2011.

Winemaking

Grenache Blanc must've mutated at some point in history from Grenache, as a whole cluster press of these green-gold clusters produces juice that seems a neon shade of orange! Although a bit alarming at first, we continue to stir the lees during fermentation, which is entirely in stainless steel under cold temperatures. This long and cold fermentation preserves the beautiful floral characteristics of the wine. With the 2011 Grenache Blanc, primary fermentation completed at the end of November, and malo-lactic fermentation was then inhibited. The wine was lightly fined with Bentonite clay to remove haze-producing proteins, and then cold stabilized to prevent tartrate crystals forming during time in a cold refrigerator. Cross-flow filtered in late spring of 2012, 113 cases were bottled in-house on May 30, 2012.

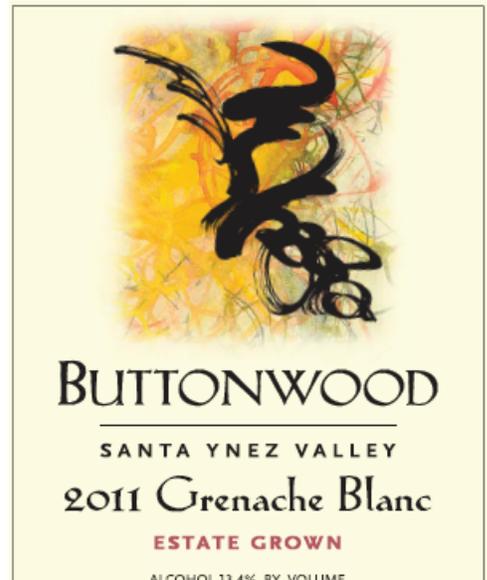
Technical Specifications: Alcohol by Volume: 13.4% pH: 3.07 TA: 6.8 grams/Liter

Tasting Notes

White-green-gold in color, with a brilliance shimmering in the glass – 2011 Grenache Blanc prettily and daintily requests a swirl. Wow! Jasmine and honeysuckle, nectarines and spicy baking spice aromas jump from the glass! The bouquet is hedonistic, leading to a thought that the wine might be sweet. But no – on the palate, Grenache Blanc refreshes with a fresh and vibrant acidity, flavors of just-ripe Anjou pears, white watermelon, white peaches and honeydew melon. A stony minerality is laced throughout the wine, with reminders of our famous Flavorcrest peaches mingling with Mexican sage and applesauce. This is a bit of a seductive wine, sublime, opulent and intense. Let's just say it's "fresh".

Pairing ideas

Honey Baked Ham (with cloves), Seared Scallops, Rabbit, Goat cheese with toasted almonds, Peach with Capers salad!



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