

2007 sauvignon blanc ■ paragon vineyard ■ edna valley

TASTING NOTES

VARIETAL BACKGROUND

Sauvignon Blanc hails from the Bordeaux and Loire regions in France, both on the Atlantic coast. More specifically, the best-known wines from Bordeaux are made in the Graves region, and in the Loire, from the Sancerre and Pouilly- Fumé areas. Other notable Sauvignon Blanc producing regions include Chile, Australia, South Africa, the Tre Venezie in Italy, Washington State and New Zealand. The latter has had a profound effect on the shape and direction of the varietal in the New World. New Zealand has created its own standard of Sauvignon Blanc. By virtue of its island geography, no vineyard is more than 80 miles from the ocean. The resulting marine influence keeps the climate cool and temperate, allowing for the grapes to ripen slowly. Intrinsic flavors to the New Zealand wines are passion fruit, fresh lime, green melon, gooseberry, wild herbs, and tropical fruits.

Sauvignon Blanc was brought to California in the late 1800s, and planted in the Livermore Valley just east of San Francisco. The vines flourished and produced good quality fruit, but inconsistent winemaking styles confused the American consumer, and the varietal didn't catch on initially. In the mid-1960s wine legend Robert Mondavi found himself with long-term contracts with Sauvignon Blanc growers and realized the need to find a way to appeal to the consumer. In a brilliant marketing move he decided to switch the name to Fumé Blanc. It was a huge success and revived sales of the varietal for all Sauvignon Blanc makers.

TANGENT SAUVIGNON BLANC

Owned and farmed by the Niven family, the Paragon Vineyard in the Edna Valley of California provides grapes for this wine. Originally planted in 1973, these are most likely the oldest Sauvignon Blanc vines south of the North Coast. With the Pacific Ocean lying only four miles to the west, its influence creates one of the longest growing seasons in the state. As in the cool climates of both France and New Zealand, the grapes leisurely ripen, creating fruit of structured minerality and good acid backbone.

Winemaker Christian Roguenant harvests at different levels of ripeness in order to achieve his ideal finished wine. One portion is picked a bit early; the higher acid and lower sugar in the berries bring a crisp citrus and slight herbal character. The middle portion is harvested at balanced ripeness, while the third is picked a little later in the season. The fruit in this last batch provides tropical notes and a round mouthfeel. Clusters are picked from different vineyard blocks at each of the three stages, and fermented separately. About a third of the lots were cold soaked for six hours to extract aromatics. Stainless steel tanks provide the perfect environment, and the fruit is kept at a cool 55 degrees during fermentation, usually lasting six to eight weeks. There is no oak influence or malo-lactic fermentation, as Christian sticks to the age-old methods. There are generally ten or so separate wines made during the winemaking process, and he painstakingly blends them to his liking before bottling.

TASTING NOTES FROM WINEMAKER CHRISTIAN ROGUENANT

"Our 2007 sauvignon blanc highlights green apple, passion fruit, lemon, and grapefruit flavors, backed by notes of grass and minerals, and balanced with a lively acidity. This wine pairs well with most all seafood, especially shellfish, and most specifically fresh oysters on the half shell."



WINE STATISTICS

Vineyard	Paragon Vineyard, Edna Valley, California, USA
Clones	1, 530 and Musque
Tons per acre	4.1
Harvest date	September 29 - October 18, 2007
Average Brix at harvest	25.35 degrees
Yeast	VL3, X5, QA23, VL1, M2
Fermentation	100% Stainless Steel ferment at 55 degrees for 63 days
Barrel contact	Zero
% ML	Zero
Alcohol	13.5%
Acid @ bottling	7.00g/l
pH @ bottling	3.32
RS @ bottling	None
Bottling date	March 31, 2008
Closure	Screwcap
Cases made	5700
Suggested Retail	\$13.00