

# VARIETAL FOCUS *Sauvignon Blanc*

Lance Cutler

**SAUVIGNON BLANC IS A** green-skinned grape variety that originated in western France in the Loire Valley and Bordeaux regions. It is likely an indigenous grape to France, and its name may come from the French *sauvage* (wild) and *blanc* (white.) Current research surmises that it may be descended from the Savagnin grape. By the 18th century, Sauvignon Blanc paired up with Cabernet Franc to produce Cabernet Sauvignon in Bordeaux.

The grape grows in the Loire Valley where it is sold most commonly as Pouilly Fumé or Sancerre. In Bordeaux it makes dry wine in Graves, Pessac-Leognan and Entre-Deux-Mers and sweet wine in Sauternes where it is often blended with Semillon and affected by Botrytis, most famously at **Chateau d'Yquem**. Because Sauvignon Blanc is vigorous and seemingly does well in a wide variety of soils and climates, it is planted in most wine-growing regions

around the world, including New Zealand, Australia, South Africa, Chile, Uruguay, Argentina, Italy, Spain and much of the United States.

Sauvignon Blanc was brought to California by **Charles Wetmore** of **Cresta Blanca Winery** in the 1880s. Some of the cuttings came from Chateau d'Yquem, and the vines thrived in the Livermore Valley but were made almost exclusively as sweet wines. The American public got over its fascination with sweet Sauvignon Blanc, and the variety languished for several decades until **Robert Mondavi** brought it back to life in 1968 as a dry white wine he called Fumé Blanc.

Wherever it is planted, Sauvignon Blanc tends to smell and taste very similar. Two primary groups of compounds give the wines their unique character. Pyrazines contribute herbaceous grass, bell pepper, grapefruit and

**Lance Cutler** has been a working winemaker in Sonoma County for 35 years. He has been a contributing editor for *Wine Business Monthly* for more than 10 years. His unique perspective on winemaking has led to our Industry Roundtable series and our Varietal Focus series. Lance is also the author of four books, including *The Tequila Lover's Guide to Mexico*.





gooseberry character. This character is more pronounced in cooler climates, with underripe grapes or in vines lacking sun exposure. Thiols are responsible for tropical fruit flavors like melon, lime, Asian pear and white peach. These aromas and flavors can be intensified with additional sun exposure, selected yeasts and specific clonal selections.

Sauvignon Blanc is made in a wide range of styles. It is usually made as a dry white wine although, when infected with Botrytis, it can produce sublime, complex sweet wines as well. Its crisp acid makes for an elegant, fruity wine that goes well with a wide variety of foods. It even does well with hard-to-pair vegetable dishes, and it makes goat cheese shine.

For this Varietal Focus on Sauvignon Blanc we picked three wineries in Sonoma County that have been producing the varietal for decades. **Tim Bell**

is winemaker for **Dry Creek Vineyard**, a seminal player in Sauvignon Blanc production. **Tom Rochioli** produces estate wine from his **Rochioli Vineyards and Winery** and **Matt Norelli** runs the show for **Preston Farm & Winery**. We looked to Napa Valley where we found **Honig Vineyard & Winery** led by **Kristin Belair**, **Hourglass Winery** had **Tony Biagi** at the helm, and **John Anthony Vineyards** produced a “Sauvignon Blanc for Chardonnay lovers” envisioned by **John Anthony Truchard**. **Aron Weinkauff** blends grapes from vineyards in both Napa and Sonoma for **Spottswode Estate Vineyard & Winery**. We rounded out our group with two wines from New Zealand’s Hawkes Bay region. **Warren Gibson** leads winemaking at the acclaimed **Trinity Hill**, and **Peter Cowley** directs winemaking at New Zealand’s oldest winery **Te Mata Estate**.



BOB MCCLLENAHAN

John Anthony Vineyards, Church Vineyard, Los Carneros.



## Dry Creek Vineyards

2015 DRY CREEK VALLEY SAUVIGNON BLANC, 14.5% ALC., 10,000 CASES, \$18, 83% SAUVIGNON BLANC, 13% SAUVIGNON MUSQUÉ, 4% SAUVIGNON GRIS

**Tim Bell** graduated with honors from the school of Enology and Viticulture at **UC Davis**. He worked at several wineries, including **Freemark Abbey** and **Kunde Winery** where he was director of winemaking. He has been winemaker at **Dry Creek Vineyards** since 2011.

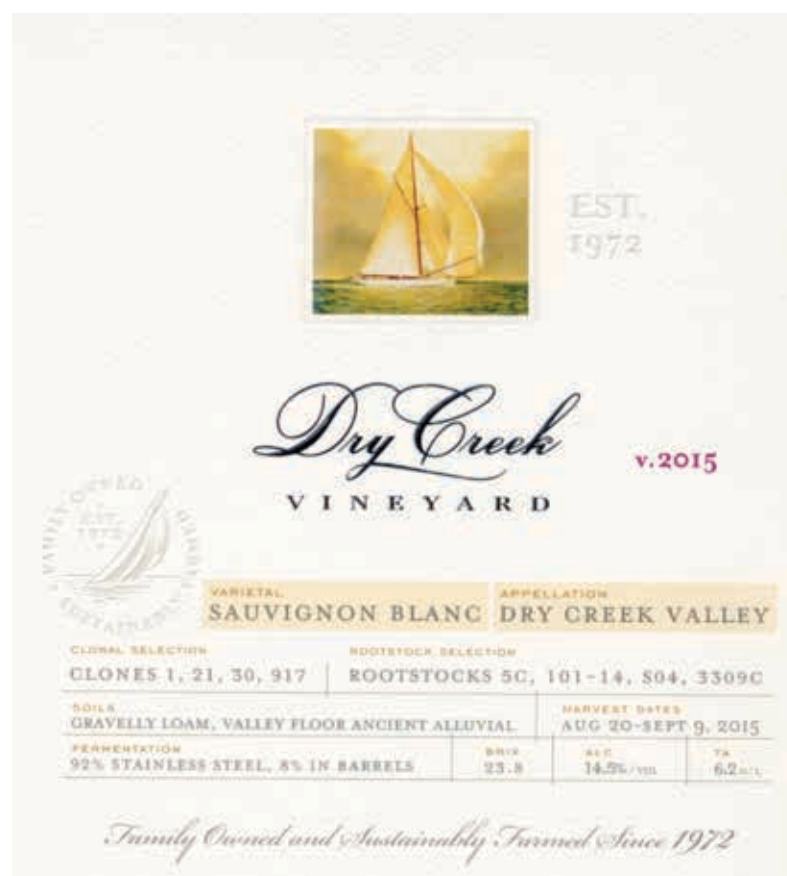
### According to Bell:

“We are looking to make a wine in a fresh, crisp style that has strong fruit, slightly herbal qualities and good acidity that is readily identifiable as Sauvignon Blanc. Within that framework, this wine is one of our riper, richer versions, with more tropical fruit and we down-played the herbal elements of the grape.



“We pick from a variety of vineyards in the Dry Creek Valley. All of them are flat, valley floor vineyards with elevations no higher than 200 feet. Soils tend to be sandy and gravelly loam, and most vineyards are planted 7x6 feet or 8x5 feet. Primarily vines grow on 101-14 or 5C rootstock, but we also have 3309 and SO4. Clone 1 is the workhorse, contributing herbal, citrus and pineapple notes. Clone 30 (Musqué) gives us more floral and musky aromatics, and clone 917 (Sauvignon Gris) lends richness, texture and elements akin to Semillon and its subtle fig flavors. All of the vineyards are irrigated and sustainably farmed.

“Most of the vineyards are cane-pruned, but older vineyards are cordoned Scott Henry. We look for dappled sunlight, being more aggressive with leaf removal for the Musqué and Sauvignon Gris. We’ll remove fruit from short shoots and if clumped together. We usually make a pass to drop fruit entering veraison. Production varies between 6 to 8 tons per acre. We keep the Musqué at the lower end of that to retain intensity.



“We monitor sugar, pH and acid, but use flavor, as well, to determine when to pick. We want the flavor to move from green to slightly herbal, with some lemongrass character, while retaining just a hint of muskiness. We watch the Musqué TA because the acid starts to drop quickly and we are looking for a wine that is crisp but not sharp. We usually pick between 23° and 24.5° Brix. Harvesting riper than that tends to turn the wine bland.

“Most of the grapes are machine-harvested. We like the few hours of skin contact we get with machine-harvested fruit. The fruit goes through our destemmer, which allows us to pull off the free-run juice and then to the press. The portion (mostly Musqué and Sauvignon Gris) used for barrel fermentation is hand-picked and whole-cluster pressed. Whole cluster fruit gets about a four-hour press cycle to increase skin contact at no more than 1.2 bar pressure. We settle juice for 48 hours at 48° F after adding Pec5L or Cinn-Free enzyme to help settling.

“The barrel-fermented portion is fermented mostly in three-year-old neutral oak barrels. We use 10 to 15 percent new oak and 5 percent acacia and chestnut barrels, which give us some creamy texture, vanilla and even cream soda elements. We use Alchemy II, VIN 13 and VL 3 yeast, adding nutrient at inoculation and again after fermentation is rolling. The Musqué clone typically has lower acid and may get a 0.5 to 1.0 g/L tartaric acid addition, but most others don’t need it. We also add some bentonite during fermentation. Tanks ferment between 55° F and 60° F and then are allowed to finish around 62° F. Barrel ferments usually peak around 68° F to 70° F.

“We use no malolactic fermentation. Tanks get racked off lees and an addition of SO<sub>2</sub>. Barrels get SO<sub>2</sub> as well, but only get racked if there are heavy lees and even then with protection from O<sub>2</sub> pickup. We rack again to blend about two to four months after fermentation. Cold stability is achieved by chilling to 30° F and then seeding with KHT. We use bentonite as needed for heat stability. The final blend is cross-flow-filtered and then sterile filtered. We give the wine two to five months’ rest before release.”



## Tasting Notes

**BELL:** I get a hint of that barrel influence, a slight Old World reductive element, but there are also some very floral aromatics in the wine. There is crisp acidity. It tastes fresh, with a Meyer lemon quality. There is a subtle creaminess, along with a crisp and fresh taste in the finish, and a bit of tangerine as well.

**ROCHIOLI:** It is slightly herbal in a positive way, but I get a lot of mineral and warm fruit, like a stone fruit of some sort. I get the creaminess in the mouth. It has this filling mouthfeel, yet it is very refreshing. The acidity is very firm, but it is very balanced. There are lemony, citrus flavors.

**NORELLI:** I get all of those herbal characteristics along with grapefruit and lemon/lime. There is just a slight hint of that cat scat, gooseberry bush flavor that I really like. The mid-mouth has medium to full body, but it has a nice acidity at the very end.

**TRUCHARD:** I get some under-ripe citrus, along with a lot of minerality. The minerality creates a dryness in the wine. It's a nice wine but a bit hard on the edges for me. It is a little displeasing on the exit. I think it would be better with food.

**WEINKAUF:** It was crisp, sulfuric with a lot of lemon, tart acidity. There was kiwi and candied pear. There is a whole lot of acid. It is a little harsh.

**BIAGI:** This has a fruit cocktail quality to it. It has peach and pear and some orange blossom. It rides a fine line of different styles. It's got some herbal character, a little wet stone. It sort of hits all the buttons. I can see it as a crowd pleaser. The finish shows the alcohol a little bit.

**BELAIR:** I agree, it is a lot like a fruit cocktail. It's got peach and pear, but then it has some cilantro on the finish. It is chunky. It is a big wine. It doesn't have the elegance of some of these other wines.

**COWLEY:** Hay, green apple, citrus and stone fruit with some methopyrazine fresh green flavor. It has good weight and a nice even structure. It is dry with good acid balance on the finish.

**GIBSON:** Lifted fresh fruit with a ripe and lush palate. This has nice balance in a riper style with stone fruit flavors. It has excellent length. It is not strongly varietal, but it is well made.



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# Rochioli Vineyards and Winery

2015 ROCHIOLI ESTATE GROWN SAUVIGNON BLANC, 14.5% ALC.,  
1,900 CASES, \$30

Tom Rochioli's family has been farming land known as **Fenton Acres** since the 1930s. The family purchased the property in the mid-1950s and planted Sauvignon Blanc and Cabernet Sauvignon in 1959. Pinot Noir followed in 1968. Tom graduated college and started a career in banking. He didn't like it, so he returned to the family farm and convinced his father to go into the wine business for themselves. In 1983 they changed the name of the farm to **Rochioli Vineyards**. Their first release of Pinot Noir from the 1985 vintage was named best Pinot Noir in America. They have consistently remained in the top-tier of wineries ever since.

## According to Rochioli:

"Our style is about purity. We want to present as pure an expression of our vineyards as possible. If anything, we are a bit like Sancerre in style. We use the various sections of our vineyard to make a Sauvignon Blanc that is crisp and clean and complex. The old vines lend richness. The newer sections give more mineral character, along with some passion fruit and grapefruit notes. Ripeness of the grapes is our only manipulation.



"Our Russian River vineyard is comprised of Yolo loam soils on flat land with elevations less than 100 feet. The old vines are planted on AXR with 8x14 foot spacings and are grown in a Geneva double curtain trellis system. The vine cuttings came from a UCD test block in 1959. The newer sections are planted 8x9 feet or 8x12 feet on 039-16 rootstock with clone 376 and are farmed using quadrilateral cordon. We farm traditionally and vineyards are dry-farmed. We will shoot-thin, pull leaves to thin canopy for air space and separate clusters. The old vines manage to produce about 1.8 to 2.5 tons per acre. The newer sections average 4 tons per acre.

"We pick based on numbers, visual clues and taste. Usually, we are waiting for pH to increase and acid to drop. We know we are close when the grapes taste less grassy and start to generate more appealing flavors. We try not to pick higher than 24° Brix. Grapes are hand-picked and then whole-cluster pressed. The old vine fruit is produced separately from the newer sections



for two reasons: it ripens at different times, and we produce a separate, small bottling of wine from these vines. We add 40 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> at the press and then settle in tanks at 50° F for about five days after adding 2 lbs./1,000 of bentonite to compact lees.

"We inoculate with QA23 yeast after which we will add Fermaid. We will add DAP around 18 Balling. Wine ferments between 60° F to 62° F until 5° Brix when we let it warm up to finish. Fermentation usually takes about 14 days. Then we rack and add SO<sub>2</sub> to 30 ppm free. We will cold stabilize by chilling to 30° F for three weeks and heat stabilize by adding another 2 lbs/1,000 bentonite, along with some isinglass, which we feel removes any astringency and enhances mouthfeel richness. We use no oak and no malolactic on our Sauvignon Blanc, again trying to maintain the purity of the vineyard. The wine is cross-flow filtered and then sterile filtered. It usually gets one month or less in bottle before release."



## Tasting Notes

**ROCHIOLI:** Initially, I get some passion fruit, grapefruit characters with lots of stone fruit. I think mineral is the key here. There is a little sweetness, some fresh lemon blossom. There is a touch of herbalness. I don't think you can get away from that with Sauvignon Blanc. The mouth is fairly rich and very flavorful and full on the palate. The acidity is firm, and the wine finishes clean.

**NORELLI:** There is a very pretty flinty character with some jasmine. I am surprised at how full it is from being all tank fermented. I get no bitterness. It finished very clean. I think it will age well.

**BELL:** The aromatics are very fresh with mineral notes. There is a sort of pleasing salinity, not like salt but like rocky soil. I think somms would really dig that. There is a bit of the passion fruit and some bright tangerine or slightly under-ripe peach. It is very fresh. There is some broadness of mouthfeel, but the wine is very direct.

**COWLEY:** Fresh peach and stone fruit with a touch of oak. It has good weight and flavors of nice white-fleshed citrus and stone fruit. It is a lively, fresh wine that stays lightly fruity and fresh to the end.

**GIBSON:** Lifted and pure. It is toasty and rich with a creamy nose. There is a suggestion of barrel aging or fermentation but well integrated if so. Some phenolics evident on the finish. It is a nice wine that is drinking well.

**BELAIR:** I get maraschino cherry. It is definitely a riper style, with higher alcohol, oak influence. There is not a ton of fruit on this. There seems to be some residual sugar. It is lemony and a little pyrazine-y on the finish.

**WEINKAUF:** I get a different read on this. I find more mandarin. I find it really floral with orange blossom aromatics right off the bat and then a kind of slate to the wine right now, which I think speaks to some reduction. Texturally, it is very balanced with a really long front and back. It finishes with soft and juicy acid. It is still there, very present but not harsh or too lemony. I really like this wine.

**BIAGI:** This is my favorite wine of the tasting. Coming from the estate in the Russian River, I'd expect more pyrazine. It rides the line of really pleasurable herbalness, almost savory herbs, like thyme or fennel, which I really like. There is some slate in there and a hard lemon drop character. I think there's a hint of oak influence because it hits you as creaminess.

**TRUCHARD:** I really like the texture. It has a nice round texture that makes it pleasant to drink. I don't think the fruit is particularly through the roof, but I think it will open up a little, but right now it is slightly closed. I get a lemon curd with that creaminess. It has extremely nice balance. I like how round it is yet still vibrant with bright acidity.

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# Preston Farm & Winery

2015 SAUVIGNON BLANC, 13.5% ALC., 1,000 CASES, \$22

**Matt Norelli** took a temporary job as an intern for **Preston Farm & Winery** in 1987 as a break from working in the restaurant industry. He caught the winemaking bug and took viticulture and chemistry classes at a community college, as well as various short courses at **UC Davis**. He has been a wine-maker at Preston since 2000.

## According to Norelli:

“Being organic/biodynamic forces us to not over-manipulate in the winery. I am partial to Sauvignon Blanc, like the wines from the Loire, but we don’t try to bend the will of the grapes to fit a particular style. We like the wine to be bright and a bit austere. We tend to end up with a Sauvignon Blanc that shows grapefruit and lemon with some hay notes. We augment mouthfeel by barrel fermenting 15 to 20 percent of the overall blend.

“Our vineyard has Yolo soils with 8x8 foot vine spacings and a 200 foot elevation. The vineyard was T-budded in 1997, using cuttings from **Ferrari-Carano** on 5C rootstock. We use drip irrigation and farm organically and biodynamically. In cool years we will do some leafing and fruit drop. In warm years we don’t worry about it. We hedge the vines once before harvest, because they start to look like a jungle. We harvest 6 to 8 tons per acre. We determine when to pick by taste and numbers. We look for the grapes to begin to yellow, have the pulp be a bit fleshy and, while retaining green flavors, we want to notice some fruit as well. We don’t normally add acid because we are biodynamic, so we tend to pick between 21.5° and 22.5° Brix and our pH is usually between 2.9 and 3.3.

“When we hand-pick, we will sort in the vineyard, slightly crush, destem and then go to the press. We stop pressing at 1.1 bar and add 25 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> at the juice stage. Juice is settled for two to three days at 50° F. We rack off the lees, sometimes warming the juice to 55° F to 60° F to get fermentation started. We don’t add yeast and very rarely add acid. We will usually add Fermaid O prior to fermentation. Fermentation is carried out at 55° F to 60° F until 5 Brix when we turn off the chiller. Tank fermentations take between three to five weeks. Fifteen to 20 percent of the juice ferments in two and three-year-old Taransaud barrels, and we will stir the lees. That fermentation is usually done in three weeks.

“We rack after fermentation and add SO<sub>2</sub>. We blend in February or March. Cold stability is done by chilling the wine, and bentonite is used for heat stability. Biodynamics dictate that total SO<sub>2</sub> be kept under 100 ppm. The wine passes through filter pads to a sterile membrane cartridge. It gets three to five months bottle age before release.”



## Tasting Notes

**NORELLI:** I get a little bit of grapefruit, kiwi, and there is a hay aspect. This wine will really open up about a year after release. There is some white peach. It is a little lean in the mouth. I get a lot of acidity initially and in the finish, so it is a bit austere. It will flesh out with time, but this is the style we are looking for.

**BELL:** I think you have achieved the style very well. Initially, I got some of that slight reductive character you get from barrel fermentation. It’s more of an Old World style. Steely, with grapefruit and nice lemon. It is pleasantly tart. It is subtle wine; but as you sit with it, more appears like some herbal character and fruit blossoms. There is a lot going on with this wine.

**ROCHIOLI:** Yeah, the more it sat open, the more I got from it. In the beginning I got a little sweet stone fruit with a little herbal character. As it opened up I got more barrel influence which was a positive vanilla character that sweetened the fruit. It is floral and fruity. On the palate it is cleansing and firm, but there is length. It would be a delicious food wine and, frankly, is very refreshing.

**COWLEY:** A bit restrained on the nose, but with white citrus and stone fruit. Good weight, almost fat, but could do with a bit more flavor. It has a dry, fresh finish.

**GIBSON:** Slightly dull nose at first that lacks freshness. The palate seems a little tired with fruit looking to have died away. Aromas and flavors of fresh hay with moderate length.

**WEINKAUF:** It is grassy, prickly, weedy and hollow. Sorry, I wish I could be nicer.

**BIAGI:** There is a bit of reduction and a bit of onion skin. I do get some cut grass and hay and a bit of spring pea tendril that I like. In the mouth it seems like there is some reductive lees quality. Flavors are more acidic, sharp and precise. It is one of the more unique wines today.

**TRUCHARD:** On the nose there is a bit of reduction, a bit too much for me. I like the mouthfeel initially, but it exits pretty acidic. It is nice and round with good texture. I think there is a lot of potential there, but something happens on the exit that makes it a little too acidic for me.

**BELAIR:** It is an odd combination of hot and tart. I agree, there is some onion or leek. It doesn’t have a whole lot of fruit. It is more savory than fruity. It doesn’t seem quite balanced to me.

# Trinity Hill

2014 TRINITY HILL SAUVIGNON BLANC, 12% ALC., 15,000 CASES, \$17

**Warren Gibson** began his winemaking career in 1987 at **Morton Estate**. He has traveled the world as a winemaker, with vintages in Australia, Italy, Hungary, France and California. He signed on at Trinity Hill when it was established in 1997. His consistent success there has had him named Wine-maker of the Year in both 2005 and 2006.

## According to Gibson:

“We are looking to make a Sauvignon Blanc with gentle flavors and aromas of lime, citrus and lemongrass, with some stone fruit. We want a food-friendly wine with some mineral character and a Sancerre-like texture, which gives some oiliness on the palate not related to residual sugar.

“This wine comes from three vineyard sites. Each vineyard has a different soil type: limestone, argillite and gravel. The vineyards span elevations between 100 and 650 feet. There are various vineyard spacings, including 7x6.5 feet, 8x5 feet and 8x6 feet. Our rootstocks are SO4 on the gravel soils, 3309 on the limestone and Schwartzman on argillite. The clone is known as mass selection. One vineyard is dry-farmed, the other two are irrigated, and all are farmed sustainably (Wine Growing New Zealand). During the season, we perform minimal leaf removal and rarely need to drop fruit. We average 3 to 5 tons per acre.

“We pick over a range of flavor profiles. We need to avoid over-ripe fruit, because we start losing typicity. Weather conditions can occasionally override optimum picking ideals and our preference is to harvest slightly early, clean and sound in these cases. We like to pick over a range of characters for complexity, with about 10 percent in the greener, fresh spectrum and 75 percent on the stone fruit/citrus side. The balance we’ll wait on hoping to develop tropical character, along with weight on the palate. Grapes are machine harvested with 100 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> added at the harvester.

“Grapes go from the harvester to the press and are then settled for a maximum of one week at 32° F to 50° F. Length of settling has to do mostly with logistics. We don’t need to add acid. After settling we will add Laffort X5 and Delta yeast, but some fermentations use indigenous yeast. We ferment between 55° F to 60° F. YANs are generally good. We use Dynastart at inoculation and rehydration, and organic nutrient and glutathione at one-third of the way through fermentation. About 25 percent of the wine is fermented in older French barriques and goes through malolactic fermentation as well. We stop one tank sweet for RS at 3g/L.

“We rack as needed for clarity and/or reduction, usually three or four times before bottling. We use bentonite for heat stability and chill to 28° F for cold stability. We use a lenticular filter and sterile membrane at bottling. The wine receives six to 12 months bottle aging before release.”



## Tasting Notes

**GIBSON:** The nose shows some bottle development. Toasty and lifted with tropical fruits and some stone fruit. A toasty richness comes through on the palate. It has good length and natural acidity with a nice zing on the palate although it lacks some weight.

**COWLEY:** Stone fruit and hay. This is a lighter-style wine. It could do with more concentration and flavor.

**NORELLI:** I get a bit of lemon rind and apple and green grass with a little jalapeño to it. It has great initial acidity and I like the body on it a lot. It is not too lush in the mouth, but with the acid it is really nice in the mouth. There is an austerity that I like.

**BELL:** Initially, I get some cat pee and gooseberry with a little steeliness. Then I get more bell pepper, maybe hints of pineapple and even a little bit of celery. In the mouth there is a lot of green chile. There is a broad feel to the palate but with a nice tartness that brings up the finish.

**ROCHIOLI:** I agree, there is fairly intense cat pee. I get a hint of black licorice and a little green pepper. It is medium- to full-bodied and tart. Not necessarily mouth-filling, but a nice entry and a cleansing finish.

**WEINKAUF:** It is aromatic and acid driven. The aromatics are linear with lemon and green bell pepper. It is less viscous than most of the Napa wines.

**BIAGI:** There is bell pepper, but I get some creaminess, almost like from wood or lees stirring. It has that pyrazine, bell pepper, fresh-cut grass aroma. Definitely has a lot of lemon and gooseberry, and some mustard seed. It is classic New Zealand Sauvignon Blanc.

**TRUCHARD:** I definitely get the gooseberry with citrus and a phenolic character you can get from citrus zest as well. It is super dry and acid-driven. Very New Zealand style.

**BELAIR:** Lots of pyrazine and really tart, lean and lemony with high tartaric acid. It has phenolic character. It’s certainly New Zealand, but it is a pretty edgy wine.







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BUELLTON - CALIFORNIA

## VARIETAL FOCUS: *Sauvignon Blanc*

### Te Mata Estate

2013 CAPE CREST SAUVIGNON BLANC, 14%, 1,850 CASES, \$30, 86% SAUVIGNON BLANC, 9% SEMILLON AND 5% SAUVIGNON GRIS

**Te Mata Estate** has New Zealand's oldest winery buildings and has commercial vineyard sites dating back to 1896. Te Mata's Coleraine is lauded as New Zealand's finest red wine. **Peter Cowley** is the technical director of winemaking and viticulture.



#### According to Cowley:

"We are trying to produce a fuller-bodied, dry Sauvignon Blanc with good fruit aromas and flavors. We get additional complexity from Semillon and Sauvignon Gris and using barrel fermentation with lees contact.

"The grapes for this wine come from two vineyards: Bullnose and Isosceles. The vineyards have an elevation of about 100 feet, with 2 feet of sandy loam over very deep gravel. Vines are spaced 6.5x8.1 feet and planted on 101-14 rootstock. Sauvignon Blanc clones are 2413 and 317. Semillon is clone BVRC 14, and Sauvignon Gris is clone 917. Our vineyards are irrigated and farmed low input traditional as per Sustainable Winegrowing New Zealand.

"We run two canes per vine, which helps to keep crop size low. We use mechanical leaf-plucking post-flowering to achieve 35 percent bunch exposure. We will perform further leaf plucking by hand to achieve 50 percent exposure in cool or wet vintages. We get 3 to 3.5 tons per acre, which is low yield by New Zealand standards. These lower crop levels give us more palate weight and flavor concentration.

"We determine when to pick mostly by flavor, but in some seasons Botrytis will play a part in our picking decisions. We expect to see no obvious pyrazine, and we look for bright tropical fruit, such as green pear and limes. At harvest our typical harvest numbers are 22° Brix, 3.2 pH and .8 TA. Grapes are carefully hand harvested. Grapes are crushed and destemmed through a must chiller to draining tanks. We add 50 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> at the crusher. After eight hours of full skin contact, we then drain to pressing. Juice is settled overnight at 50° F.

"We rarely add any acid, but occasionally de-acidify a gram or two. We add thiol/fruit-enhancing strains of yeast and use Fermaid incrementally during the first half of fermentation. We will add DAP if a sulfide problem persists. The wine is fermented exclusively in French oak barrels with 33 percent new. We cool ferment in barrels using an in-house stainless cooling probe, keeping temperatures between 64° F and 73° F. We stir lees weekly during fermentation and then every other week until sulfuring. After that, we stir lees once monthly.

"The wine is racked off the gross lees at eight to nine months. A light casein fining smooths out the oak and skin tannins. The wine is usually heat stable, but we add 50 to 100 ppm bentonite to bring the casein fining down. Cold stability is achieved by chilling to 32° F for two weeks. The wine is filtered through K100 pads and receives three months' aging in the bottle before release."



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## Tasting Notes

**COWLEY:** Fresh oak and tropical fruit aromas. There is lime, green pear and grapefruit backed up with a coconut flesh oak note. Sweet fruit, nectarine and pear flavors. Fine dry grip with good weight and structure. A quite exotic fruit flavor runs through the wine.

**GIBSON:** Lifted with attractive stone fruit and exotic tropical fruits, like guava. It has a very powerful nose with a creamy and long palate full of stone fruit and nectarine. Very long and lingering. Delicious wine, almost Pouilly Fumé in style with some well-integrated oak work.

**BELL:** There is some fairly prominent oak in the wine, not so much toastiness but more a fresh-cut wood quality. There is a bit of diesel aspect that Sauvignon Blanc can take on with age. It is pleasantly tart with a little creaminess that I assume comes from barrel fermentation. There is a sort of ripe apple fruit flavor.

**ROCHIOLI:** This is less cat pee than the Trinity Hill with more rosemary, herb garden and lavender. It is a riper wine. There is a little vanilla or oak. Once again, medium- to full-bodied with a tart apple flavor.

**NORELLI:** I get some oak characteristics, some onion grass and apple. I found it a tad astringent in the mouth. It is lean on the palate but carries itself well.

**BIAGI:** This is cut grass, herbal, bell peppers. It reminds me of old-style Monterey Cabernet but in white form. It is a very distinctive style. There is chalk and a salinity, sort of under-ripe character, along with that mustard seed. This has more sweetness in the mouth than Trinity Hill.

**TRUCHARD:** Passion fruit and pyrazine-driven, but in a ripe style more like red grapefruit. The green character dominates, but it is there. I'm thinking it is riper because of the sensation of RS. It is weightier than the first one.

**BELAIR:** It seems like there is some wood on it or maybe some lees. Or it may just be that it is 2013 and that age is coming across as wood. There is some roasted red-based fruit. There is definitely a richer mouthfeel. Instead of tart lemon, it finishes with a chalkiness. It has less pyrazine as well.

**WEINKAUF:** I get some oak, vanilla and bubble gum, then more of the cat pee character. It is borderline harsh, but there is some tart lemon as well. It would be nice to see something softening that edge a little.



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# Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery

2015 SPOTTSWOODE SAUVIGNON BLANC, 14.1% ALC.,  
3,253 CASES, \$38

**Aron Weinkauf** earned his degree in viticulture and enology at **Fresno State University**. He served as assistant winemaker at **Ficklin Vineyards** and as part of the **Paul Hobbs'** winemaking team. He joined **Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery** as assistant winemaker in 2006. Named vineyard manager in 2009, he added winemaker to his duties in 2011. He now serves as both winemaker and vineyard manager for Spottswoode.



## According to Weinkauf:

"If we have a model, it is Loire, somewhat reductive with a barrel component that lends breadth. We want a wine that is aromatic and acid driven, but still has texture and density with a spectrum of Sauvignon Blanc flavors, including citrus, cassis bud and white peach.

"The grapes for this wine come from five different vineyards in both Napa and Sonoma counties. Soils are primarily well-drained clay loam. We have a variety of vine spacings and exposures and the elevations vary from 50 feet to 1,500 feet. There are several different rootstocks with Clone 1, Clone 6 and Musqué. The vineyards all have drip irrigation. We have traditional, organic and biodynamic vineyards in the mix.

"In the vineyard we drop green fruit, hedge vigorous growth and use a variety of trellising systems to minimize the fruit being overexposed to sunlight. We pick according to Brix and taste. Early on, the fruit tastes bitter, acidic and hollow. We look for synchronized flavor, power and balance, which usually has us picking at 22.5° to 24° Brix.

"Grapes are hand-picked to bins. We usually don't need to sort but will if necessary. Grapes are whole-cluster pressed, and 40 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> is added. We settle the juice for 24 to 48 hours at 50° F. We usually don't need to make acid additions. We ferment in a variety of fermenters to increase complexity in the finished wine. We use stainless steel, oak barrels, concrete eggs and ceramic vessels. We use a variety of different yeasts. Nutrient is added after a 3° to 6° drop in Brix and then again around 6° to 8° Brix. Fermentation temperatures fluctuate between 58° F to 64° F. We ferment to complete dryness then top up the various tanks and add SO<sub>2</sub>. We might stir the lees up to four times during the five months the wine sits on lees. We blend the lots to tank, cold stabilize by chilling to 40° F, and heat stabilize using bentonite, if needed. Often the extra time on the lees makes the wine heat stable. The wine is cross-flow and sterile filtered, usually receiving no real time in bottle before release due to market demands."

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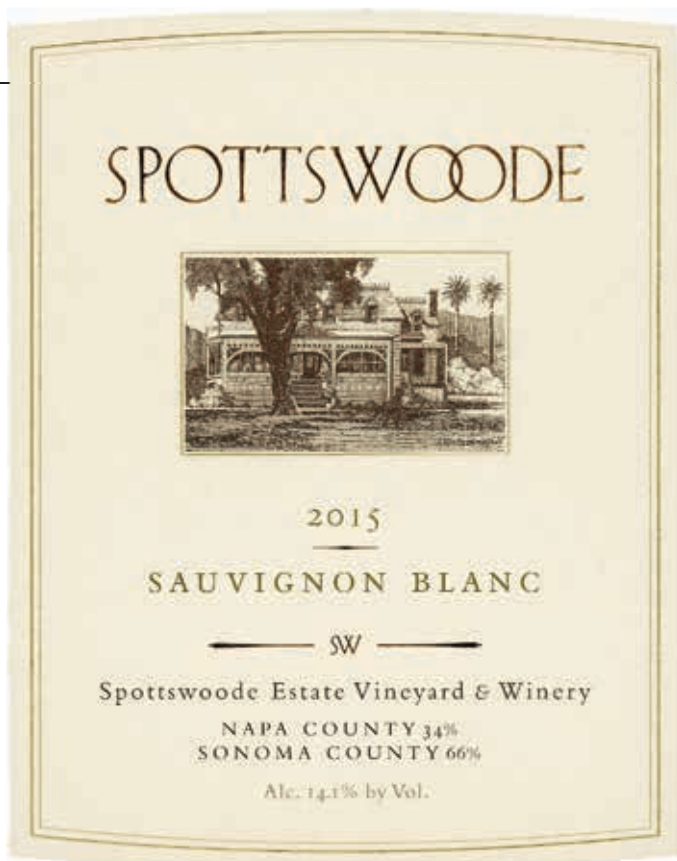
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### Tasting Notes

**WEINKAUF:** It is reductive with white peach and with some phenolics that make it more angular. It is not as sexy or showy as the Honig or Hourglass right off the bat, but this is built for the long haul and will open up and evolve in the glass and with additional bottle age. There is a richness and density. The reductive component is holding everything really taut right now, but you can taste the stone fruit, citrus and everything in it, but it is just not as open at the moment.

**BELAIR:** I get a lot of peach and fig on this wine with less citrus. It has a nice, round mid-palate and a firm, tightly wound finish with phenolics and acidity. It needs more time.

**TRUCHARD:** I get lime and hard nectarine. It is very pretty wine and focuses on the acidity, which I like a lot. There is also some white peach, along with the nectarine. It is a nice crisp quaffer.

**BIAGI:** It is definitely in the reductive style of white Burgundy. There is a chalkiness that I really like with some pineapple husk or cantaloupe rind that I find really pretty. There is some hard lime, nectarine and a savoriness I really like too. There is even some salinity almost like good Chablis. It is gorgeous, classic wine.

**ROCHIOLI:** There is a subtle hay character with some vanilla, oak flavor. There is a little bit of the pungent Sauvignon Blanc herbal character. The wine is firm, almost tannic and has a nice grip. The acidity is very decent. There is a subtlety here.

**NORELLI:** I think it is very elegant with an orange creamsicle note to it. It is floral. It is not opulent, but it is not austere either. It has a slightly higher pH that lends a really nice finish. I get the acidity at the very end.

**BELL:** I thought the aroma was fresh and tropical. It reminded me a little bit of the floral quality of Viognier. The flavor has a lot of jasmine with tartness and a hint of vanilla. There is a creamy texture to the wine with some white pepper on the finish.



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DATA SHEET: *Sauvignon Blanc*

S O N O M A

WINERY	Dry Creek Vineyards	Rochioli Vineyards and Winery	Preston Farm & Winery
<b>Wine</b>	2015 Sauvignon Blanc	2015 Estate-Grown Sauvignon Blanc	2015 Sauvignon Blanc
<b>Blend</b>	83% Sauvignon Blanc, 13% Sauvignon Musque, 4% Sauvignon Gris	100% Sauvignon Blanc	100% Sauvignon Blanc
<b>Winemaker</b>	<b>Tim Bell</b>	<b>Tom Rochioli</b>	<b>Matt Norelli</b>
<b>Style Goals</b>	We want a fresh, crisp style that has strong fruit and slightly herbal flavors and good acidity. This is one of our riper, richer versions with more tropical fruit flavors, downplaying the herbal elements and highlighting some cramy textures.	Make a crisp, crisp clean wine that represents the vineyard with as much pure Sauvignon Blanc character as possible.	Austere style similar to Loire. Typically grapefruit and lemon notes with some hay, not grassy elements.
<b>AVA</b>	Dry Creek Valley	Russian River	Dry Creek Valley
<b>Vineyard</b>	Various vineyards	Rochioli Estate Vineyard	Preston Estate Vineyard
<b>VINEYARD DATA</b>			
<b>Predominant Geology (soil type)</b>	Sandy and gravelly loam	Yolo loam	Yolo
<b>Elevation</b>	100 to 200 feet	90 feet	200 feet
<b>Vine Spacing</b>	7x6 feet or 8x5 feet	8x9 feet, 8x14 feet and 8x12 feet	8x8 feet
<b>Rootstock</b>	Mostly 101-14 and 5C with some 3308 and SO4	039-16, old AXR-1	5C
<b>Exposure</b>	DVC vineyard north/south rows; others northeast/southwest	North/south planting with east/west exposure	North/south with east/west exposure
<b>Clones</b>	Clone 1, 21, 30 (Musqué), 917 (Sauvignon Gris)	376, old vine UCO selection 1959 (unknown)	Cuttings from Ferrari Carano, planted in 1997
<b>Irrigation or Dry-farmed</b>	Irrigated	Dry-farmed	Drip irrigation
<b>Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)</b>	Sustainably farmed	Traditional	Organic/Biodynamic
<b>Production</b>	6 to 8 tons per acre	4 tons per acre on new plantings, 1.8 tons per acre on old vineyard	6 tons per acre
<b>Vineyard Practices</b>	We'll make a pass entering veraison dropping fruit and stub shoots; clear wadded clusters; want dappled to full sunlight	Quad cordon vertical with 8 spurs per side and 2 buds per shoot on the newer vineyards; shoot thin and drop fruit as needed; separate clusters	Some leaf pulling in cool years and some fruit drop in heavy years, but we don't worry in warm years.; hedge at least once before harvest
<b>WINEMAKING DATA</b>			
<b>When to Pick</b>	Pick mostly on flavor; wait for acid drop, looking for crisp wine, but not sharp, and a bit of mustiness	Wait for pH to rise and acids to drop; want near-ripeness to create less grassy character, but always pick before 24° Brix	Pick on taste and numbers usually in the 21.5° to 22.5° Brix range; want to retain some green flavors, but wait for some riper fruit notes to appear
<b>SO<sub>2</sub></b>	40 ppm	40 ppm at processing	25 ppm at juice stage, 40 ppm post ferment
<b>Crush Format</b>	Mostly machine-harvested with some whole cluster on Musqué and Sauvignon Gris lots	Sort in field, whole cluster to press	Sort in vineyard, pick to bins, crush and destem to press
<b>Settle</b>	48 hours at 48° F with Pec5L or Cinn-Free enzyme	55° F for 3 to 4 days	2 to 3 days at 50° F
<b>Yeast</b>	Alchemy II, VIN 13, VL3	QA 23	None added
<b>Fermentation Temperature</b>	Tanks 55° to 60° F, warming at 6 to 7 Brix. Barrel fermentations peak at 68 to 70° F.	60 to 62° F until 5 Brix, then allow to warm to finish fermentation.	55° F to 60° F, turn chiller off at 5° Brix
<b>Fermentation Technique</b>	Normal	2 lbs. per 1,000 bentonite at juice stage	Normal
<b>Nutrients</b>	Add yeast nutrient at inoculation and again after fermentation is rolling; occasionally add DAP	Fermaid after yeast addition, DAP at 18° Brix	Fermaid O prior to fermentation
<b>Acid Addition</b>	Sometimes 0.5 to 1.0 g/L for Musqué.	None, occasional acid reduction	None added
<b>Malolactic</b>	None	None	None
<b>Racking</b>	Post fermentation; barrel portion only if plentiful lees or reduction, then for blend	Once after fermentation and once after fining	Once post-fermentation unless there are problems
<b>Cold/Heat Stability</b>	Chill to 30° F and seed with KHT; Bentonite added during fermentation and in final blend	Chill to 30° F for three weeks for cold stability; add additional 2 lbs. per 1,000 bentonite	Chill in stainless tank for cold stability; use bentonite for heat stability
<b>Barrel-aging</b>	Neutral oak barrels, chestnut barrels and acacia barrels		15 to 20 percent in two- and three-year-old French oak barrels
<b>Filtration</b>	Crossflow filter then sterile-membrane filtered	Sterile filter	Filter pads to sterile membrane
<b>Bottle-aging</b>	2 to 5 months	1 month	3 to 5 months
<b>Tanks</b>	Stainless tanks with 8 to 10 percent barrel fermented in neutral oak, chestnut wood barrels and acacia wood barrels	Stainless steel	Stainless tanks with 15 to 20 percent two- and three-year-old French oak barrels



# DATA SHEET: *Sauvignon Blanc*

	NEW ZEALAND		SONOMA / NAPA
WINERY	Trinity Hill	Te Mata Estate	Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery
<b>Wine</b>	2014 Trinity Hill Sauvignon Blanc	2013 Cape Crest Sauvignon Blanc	2015 Sauvignon Blanc
<b>Blend</b>	100% Sauvignon Blanc	86% Sauvignon Blanc, 9% Semillon, 5% Sauvignon Gris	100% Sauvignon Blanc
<b>Winemaker</b>	<b>Warren Gibson</b>	<b>Phil Brodie</b>	<b>Aron Weinkauff</b>
<b>Style Goals</b>	Make a wine with gentle flavors and aromas of lime, citrus and lemongrass with some stone fruit. A food-friendly wine with a mineral, Sancerre-like texture.	Produce a fuller bodied, dry Sauvignon Blanc with good fruit aromas and flavors with added flavors and complexity from Semillon, Sauvignon Gris, barrel fermentation and lees.	Produce an aromatic, acid driven wine that is still textural and dense and dynamic with the spectrum of sauvignon blanc flavors of citrus, cassis bud and white peach.
<b>AVA</b>	Hawkes Bay, New Zealand	Hawkes Bay, New Zealand	66% Sonoma County, 34% Napa County
<b>Vineyard</b>	Three different sites	Bullnose Vineyard, Isosceles Vineyard	Two different sites
<b>VINEYARD DATA</b>			
<b>Predominant Geology (soil type)</b>	Limestone, agrillite, gravels	Sandy loam over very deep gravel	Well drained clay loam
<b>Elevation</b>	100 feet to 650 feet	100 feet	50 feet to 1,500 feet
<b>Vine Spacing</b>	7x6.5 feet, 8x5 feet, 8x6 feet	6.5x8 feet	Many
<b>Rootstock</b>	SO4 on gravel, 3309 on limestone, Schwartzman on argillite	101-14	Many
<b>Exposure</b>	Various	N/A	Various
<b>Clones</b>	Mass selection (MS)	Sauvignon Blanc 2413 and 317, Semillon BVRC 12, Sauvignon Gris 917	1, 6, Musque
<b>Irrigation or Dry-farmed</b>	One dry-farmed, the other two irrigated	Irrigated	Drip irrigation
<b>Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)</b>	Sustainable Wine Growing New Zealand	Low input traditional, Sustainable Wine Growing New Zealand	Traditional, organic and Biodynamic
<b>Production</b>	3 to 5 tons per acre	3 to 3.5 tons per acre	4.5 tons per acre
<b>Vineyard Practices</b>	Minimal leaf removal and rarely need to drop fruit	Two canes; mechanical leaf plucking post flowering to achieve 35% bunch exposure; hand leafing for 50% exposure in cool/wet vintages	Handle vines to avoid overexposure of fruit
<b>WINEMAKING DATA</b>			
<b>When to Pick</b>	Pick over a range of flavor profiles; need to avoid overripe fruit because we lose typicity	Pick mostly by flavor, with no obvious pyrazines and look for bright tropical fruit flavors of green pear and limes	Watch for balance of fruit flavor, acid and sugar, usually 22° to 23.5° Brix
<b>SO<sub>2</sub></b>	100 ppm at harvester	50 ppm at harvester	40 ppm at press
<b>Crush Format</b>	Machine harvested direct to press	Carefully hand harvested; destem and crush through must chiller to draining tanks; 8 hours full skin contact, then 8-hour drain	Pick, usually without sorting and whole-cluster press
<b>Settle</b>	32° F to 50° F for maximum of one week	Settle overnight at 50° F	24 to 48 hours at 50° F
<b>Yeast</b>	Lafort X5 and Delta	Thiol/fruit enhancing strains	Many
<b>Fermentation Temperature</b>	55° F to 60° F	64° F to 73° F	58° Ambient
<b>Fermentation Technique</b>	Stop one tank sweet for RS at 3g/L	100% barrel fermented	None
<b>Nutrients</b>	YANs generally good; Dynastart at inoculation and rehydration; organic nutrient and glutathione at 1/3 through ferment	Fermaid incrementally during first half of ferment and DAP if sulfide problem persists	Check YAN and follow nutrient suggestions
<b>Acid Addition</b>	Not necessary	Very rare, sometimes need to deacidify 1 or 2 g/L	Usually none
<b>Malolactic</b>	About 25 percent from barrel portion	None	None
<b>Racking</b>	When required; usually 3 or 4 times	Rack off gross lees at 8 to 9 months	Once for bottling blend
<b>Cold/Heat Stability</b>	Traditional chilling at 28° F; Bentonite for heat stability	Chill for 2 weeks at 32° F; add 50 to 100 ppm bentonite to bring casein fining down	Chill in tank for cold stability; usually no further heat stability is needed
<b>Barrel-aging</b>	25% older French barrique for barrel fermentation	100% French oak ferment and aging, 33% new	15% new French, 20% used French
<b>Filtration</b>	Lenticular and membrane to bottle	K100 pads	Cross-flow and sterile filtered
<b>Bottle-aging</b>	6 to 12 months	3 months	Usually none due to market demand
<b>Tanks</b>	Stainless steel tanks with 25% in older French barriques	Exclusively French oak barrels with 33% new	Stainless steel, oak (new and used) ceramic and concrete



## N A P A V A L L E Y

WINERY	Honig Vineyard & Winery	Hourglass Vineyards	John Anthony Vineyards
<b>Wine</b>	2015 Sauvignon Blanc	2015 Estate Sauvignon Blanc	2015 Church Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc
<b>Blend</b>	95% Sauvignon blanc, 4% Semillon, 1% Muscat	100% Sauvignon Blanc	100% Sauvignon Blanc
<b>Winemaker</b>	<b>Kristin Belair</b>	<b>Tony Biagi</b>	<b>Jeff Kandarian</b>
<b>Style Goals</b>	To create a wine that is bright, lush and fruity with a balance of citrus and tropical characters.	White Bordeaux sensibilities more than Loire or New Zealand. We look for wet stone character, flavored by fig and stone fruit. We want the wine to be rich and oily in the mouth without mimicking Chardonnay.	We are trying to make a more serious and mature Sauvignon Blanc. One with added depth and texture and a bit more weight; Grand Cru style. A Sauvignopn Blanc for the Chardonnay lover.
<b>AVA</b>	Napa Valley	Napa Valley	Los Carneros
<b>Vineyard</b>	Several	Hourglass Estate Vineyard	Church Vineyard
<b>VINEYARD DATA</b>			
<b>Predominant Geology (soil type)</b>	Various, mostly valley floor	Loam and gravel	Cole Silt Loam (alluvial)
<b>Elevation</b>	20 to 350 feet	200 feet (Valley floor)	155 feet
<b>Vine Spacing</b>	7x12 feet	4x8 feet	10x5 feet
<b>Rootstock</b>	Primarily 039-16 and 101-14	101-14 and Heritage	1103 P
<b>Exposure</b>	Various	Mixed	24° heading, northeast-southwest
<b>Clones</b>	Primarily Clone 1	Varozza 1, Musqué 4	Western and Musque 317
<b>Irrigation or Dry-farmed</b>	Both, depending on vineyard	Drip irrigation	Irrigated
<b>Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)</b>	Sustainable, organic and traditional	Traditional/sustainable	Sustainable
<b>Production</b>	Varies from 3 to 10 tons per acre	3.5 to 4.2 tons per acre	4.24 tons per acre
<b>Vineyard Practices</b>	Leave it to the growers, who know their individual vineyards best	Pull leaves on morning side only when not in direct morning sun line	Two clusters per shoot max amd one cluster on short shoots; divided canopy cordon with heavy and early leafing in fruiting zone
<b>WINEMAKING DATA</b>			
<b>When to Pick</b>	Check Brix and flavor with an eye toward weather, labor availability, tank space and processing capacity at winery	Flavor is key, but watch numbers; shooting for alcohol no higher than 14.4%	Flavor cues, maturity metric analysis and visual/physical vine cues
<b>SO<sub>2</sub></b>	40 to 100 ppm	30 ppm at press, 35 ppm post fermentation	25 ppm to press pan
<b>Crush Format</b>	Whole-cluster pressed, some destemmed and left on skins for several hours	Whole-cluster press 50% to 60%; crush/press 20% to 30%; skin contact 24 to 48 hours	Field sorted, whole-cluster pressed
<b>Settle</b>	48 to 72 hours	Whole-cluster 24 hours at 52° F; other lots 36 to 48 hours 40° F to 52° F	72 hours at 50° F
<b>Yeast</b>	Various about 6 different strains	45% to 50% native; QA 23, VL3, EC1118	VL3
<b>Fermentation Temperature</b>	55°F	Tank 52° F to 55° F, barrels 58° F to 62° F	50° F to 60° F
<b>Fermentation Technique</b>	Normal	Normal	1.5 percent water addition, barrel ferment
<b>Nutrients</b>	Depends on fermentation progress, will use Superfood and DAP	Depending on ZAN add Fermaid K and or DAP	2 lbs. per 1,000 gallons Micro Essential at first sign of yeast activity; 2 lbs. per 1,000 gallons DAP at 1/3 Brix depletion
<b>Acid Addition</b>	Rarely	Before fermentation, no higher than 7g/L	0.35g/L at racking from settling tank
<b>Malolactic</b>	None	None	As it will
<b>Racking</b>	Once off gross lees, then again to assemble blends	One time pre-stabilizing, once after	Only out of barrel to blend for bottling
<b>Cold/Heat Stability</b>	Chill to 28° F for cold stability and bentonite for heat stability	In tank at 28° F with seeding for cold and with bentonite during cold stabilization	Cold stability via CMC; heat stability via bentonite
<b>Barrel-aging</b>	None	20% new BDX Sylvain barrels, cigars Ermitage, 25% used Burgundy barrels	100% French oak; 40% new, 40% once-used, 20% neutral
<b>Filtration</b>	Sterile 0.45 micron	Sterile filtered	Cross-flow and membrane filtered
<b>Bottle-aging</b>	Minimal	3 to 6 months	3 months
<b>Tanks</b>	Stainless and neutral oak tanks	750 gallon Portatank, cigars (barrels), stainless steel drums, old Burgundy barrels, new box oak	Stainless steel tanks with 12% to 20% in neutral oak barrels



# Honig Vineyard & Winery

2015 NAPA VALLEY SAUVIGNON BLANC, 13.5% ALC.,  
50,000 CASES, \$18 95% SAUVIGNON BLANC, 4% SEMILLON,  
1% MUSCAT

**Kristin Belair** graduated with her degree from **UC Davis** in 1981. She began her career working as an intern at **Trefethen Vineyards**. A second internship in Australia was followed by a winemaking position with **John-son-Turnbull** in 1985. In 1998, after 13 years at Turnbull, she joined Honig as winemaker.

## According to Belair:

“We are working in a riper multifaceted style, looking to make a pleasant porch-sipping wine. The style is bright and fresh with characteristics of tropical, citrus and stone fruit. We look for a balanced wine with enough structure to carry the flavors and texture all the way through the palate but with enough acidity to be crisp on the finish. We want the flavors to be complex enough to entice a person to keep tasting the wine, trying to identify each nuance.

“This wine comes from many different vineyards, mostly on the valley floor at elevations between 20 and 350 feet. The bulk of the vines are planted in 7x12 foot or 8x10 foot spacings. The majority of the vines are



Clone 1, but we have others as well. Most of the rootstock is 039-16 and 101-14. Some of the vineyards are dry farmed, others are irrigated. We have traditional, sustainable and organic vineyards. For the most part, we work with experienced growers and rely on them to care properly for the vineyards.

“Sauvignon Blanc is a malleable and versatile variety. We don’t think tonnage is essential to quality. It tends to ripen early, which means it is maturing during longer days with lots of sunlight, which helps to control the pyrazines. For the most part, we try to pick between 23.5° and 24° Brix. Brix is a key factor in making our picking choices although flavor and other factors, such as labor availability, tank space, production capability/logistics at the winery and weather all influence our picking decisions.

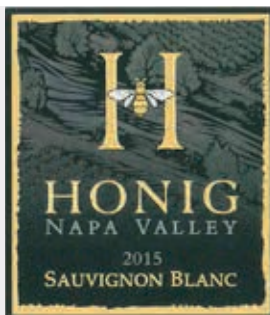
“Grapes are picked into macro bins and taken to the winery where they are processed one of two ways. Some fruit is destemmed to a tank, where it gets three to six hours of skin contact and then gets pressed. The rest gets whole-cluster pressed. We base our decisions on the condition of the fruit, vineyard source and processing logistics. We add 60 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> to the juice in tank and settle for 48 to 72 hours. We typically do not need to add acid.

“We check YAN and use yeast nutrients as fermentation conditions dictate. We use about half a dozen different strains of active dry yeast to carry out fermentation. At this size, we choose not to use native/feral yeast for fermentations because we feel that the risk versus the potential benefit is not there. All of the wine ferments in stainless steel tanks at 55° F. We will warm to 60° F to finish if the fermentation is sluggish.

“We will rack off the gross lees at the end of fermentation and then again to blend. We cold stabilize by seeding with potassium bitartrate and chilling down to 28° F. We use bentonite fining for heat stability. The Napa Sauvignon Blanc does not see oak or undergo malolactic fermentation. The wine is sterile filtered for bottle and receives minimal aging before release.”

## Tasting Notes

**BELAIR:** It is very aromatic with stone fruit, melon and underlying citrus. It is exactly what we wanted it to be. There is flavor and structure all the way through the palate. It has a nice roundness on the mid-palate with a hint of phenolics that enhances the acid on the finish. The grapefruit notes on the finish are complemented by a smidge of residual sugar to add some weight and roundness to the mid-palate and add balance to the wine.



**NORELLI:** Very faint cat pee but with an aroma of Jolly Green Rancher candy with some peach. I think there is a bit of RS. It finishes sweet with good length.

**BELL:** Very clean aromatically with some candied fruit. It has bright lemon but with a candied quality to it, almost like bubble gum, it is so youthful somehow. It has a creamy mouthfeel with moderate acidity. It’s not flabby, but it’s not tart like some of the others we’ve tasted. There is a floral, bubble gum finish.

**BIAGI:** This wine, to me, is Napa Valley Sauvignon Blanc. It is fresh and clean with lemon blossom, tons of peach character and beautiful lemon, almost like lemon margarita mix. It is precise, laser-focused with persistence. It is gorgeous. I love this wine.

**ROCHIOLI:** Very subtle, light grass, melon aromas. It is kind of rich and ripe with less acidity. The RS thing might be the cause but definitely moderate to less acidity than most others. It has a very pleasing melon flavor.

**TRUCHARD:** There are certain wines that win the taste test. This wine wins the bottle test. It’s the first bottle to get emptied. The pyrazines are beautifully managed. It has great acid without being overly acidic. It has a perception of sweetness without being sweet or cloying in any way.

**COWLEY:** This is the lightest color of the wines. There is some fresh minty Muscat and lime citrus blossom aromas, which I find attractive. The aromas are repeated on the palate, and the flavors remain fresh and lively to the end.

**WEINKAUF:** I agree, it is quintessential Napa Valley. I love it. There is fresh stone fruit and a lot of grapefruit right up front. Then the texture starts building, but there is a kind of saline and juicy acidity that is so mouthwatering that it makes you keep going back for more.

**GIBSON:** Fresh vibrant color. It is lifted and estery with some greener notes on the nose. It seems to be a younger wine based on color and aroma. It has fresh fruit in a reserved way. It is not strongly varietal, but has excellent length and precision. Excellent young wine.



# Hourglass Winery

2015 HOURGLASS ESTATE SAUVIGNON BLANC, 14.2% ALC.,  
950 CASES, \$45

**Tony Biagi** earned a degree in fermentation science at **UC Davis**. He interned at both **Dry Creek Vineyards** and **Hess Collection** before joining **Duckhorn Vineyards** as an enologist working with **Tom Rinaldi**, and then graduating to winemaker at **Paraduxx** winery. He joined the **Plumpjack Group** in 2003, making wine at both **CADE Estate Winery** and Plumpjack wineries. He moved to **Hourglass Wine Company** as winemaker for their two estate vineyards in 2012.

## According to Biagi:

“We are trying to make a wine with white Bordeaux sensibilities rather than Loire or New Zealand. We want our wine to have wet stone, fig and stone fruit, and we want some fat, oily character without getting too much like Chardonnay. We love the complex layering brought about by skin contact, different vineyards and varied winemaking techniques.

“Our Sauvignon Blanc comes from two separate vineyards: Larkmead and Varozza. Both share loam and gravel soils, valley floor sites under 200 feet and 4x8 or x10 foot spacings. Larkmead has Musqué 1 on 101-14 rootstock while Varozza has the same rootstock but a heritage clone.

“At both vineyards we let the growers work their vineyards, which are farmed traditional/sustainable and use drip irrigation. We handle the vines by keeping two clusters per shoot, depending on shoot strength and length. We will pull leaves on the morning side only when not in the direct morning sun line. Over-cropping is not an issue in these vineyards, and yields are between 3.5 and 4.2 tons per acre.

“We pick based on flavor while keeping a close eye on Brix, TA and pH. We shoot for an alcohol no higher than 14.4 percent. Typically we harvest between 22° to 23.5° Brix with total acids between .65 and .75, and pH in the 3.20 to 3.35 range. We pick into half-ton bins without sorting.



“We whole-cluster press 50 to 60 percent. That portion gets 24 hours of settling at 52° F and then goes to barrels for native yeast fermentations. Of the balance, 20 to 30 percent of the grapes are crushed and pressed with 10 percent getting skin contact for 24 to 48 hours in a bin with dry ice. Both of these portions settle for 36 to 48 hours at 40° F to 52° F before getting racked to 75-gallon stainless barrels, cigars and a 750-gallon Porta Tank. We add 30 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> at the press.

“We usually don’t add acid and never go above 7 g/L. Other than the barrel-fermented portion, we will add QA 23, VL 3 or EC 1118 yeast. We use Fermaid K and DAP, shooting for a YAN of 200. Tank ferments at 52° F to 55° F. Barrels ferment 58° F to 62° F. Our barrel blend incorporates 20 percent new Sylvain, 25 percent used Burgundy and Ermitage Cigars. Once the fermenting wine reaches 1° Brix, we begin stirring lees every other week. The tank portion sits on lees until January. We rack one time pre-stabilization. Cold stabilization occurs in tank with seeding at 28° F with bentonite for heat stability. We also use PVPP to remove any pinking. The wine is sterile filtered and receives three to six months’ bottle age before release.”



## Tasting Notes

**BIAGI:** This has more of that wet stone, almost black licorice or anise. There are hints of white flower and white pepper. I get more of the acidity in the mouth with some lemon-lime, almost like lemon curd. I get some of the lees character. It is more white Bordeaux than pure fresh fruit. The finish has good acidity, and I love the texture and oiliness that run to the finish.

**TRUCHARD:** There is a glycerol oiliness, a creamy smoothness, but it remains clearly Sauvignon Blanc. There is a richness with great complexity from the lees that is independent of the grapes.

**WEINKAUF:** I really like the overall weight and phenolic structured version of Sauvignon Blanc. It doesn't open up as quickly as the Honig did. The aromatics are more muted, but you can tell it is all there. There is a nuance of lemon meringue from the new barrel component, but it is really subtle. It holds and is slower to unravel. The structure and density are impressive, and I like the overall balance of it. There is more lime juice than stone fruit and lemon, and the anise component is great.

**BELAIR:** I really like this wine. It is a great example of that white Bordeaux style. On the nose I got that rose petal, jasmine that went into ground coriander seeds. It has a nice balance between floral and savory. A lot of wet stone and mineral through the palate and subtle peach flavors. It is really well balanced. The acidity is high for Sauvignon Blanc but totally fits the wine. There is a nice richness on the mid-palate to balance everything, and there are good flavors throughout.

**BELL:** This was pretty clean and slightly floral, even with a bit of dry hay character but not terribly intense. The flavor has a little bit of vanilla maybe from a touch of oak, but nothing in your face. There is some apple and a bit of mineral as well.

**ROCHIOLI:** Very subtle aromas of light dry grass and apple. I thought there was pretty firm acidity. There is definitely a nice mineral quality, and I think there is a touch of oak here.

**NORELLI:** It is delicate aromatically. It doesn't jump out of the glass. There is apricot, a little green grass, apples, and it finishes very dry, especially after the Honig. The finish is almost tannic. I think this will age well.

**COWLEY:** I get restrained stone fruit, fresh citrus blossom notes and a hint of coriander seed spice. It has good weight. There is white stone fruit and citrus flavor. It is fresh wine that is nicely balanced but could use a bit more flavor.

**GIBSON:** Lighter color. It is slightly dull and not giving much at first. It is a younger wine with some fermentation esters still evident. It has a relative low acidity feel. It has good length and excellent richness. There is almost a suggestion of an alternative variety on the nose, maybe Albariño.



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# John Anthony Vineyards

2015 JOHN ANTHONY CHURCH VINEYARD SAUVIGNON BLANC, 14% ALC., 205 CASES, \$28

**John Anthony Truchard** grew up in Napa Valley vineyards. He worked with his father at **Truchard Vineyards and Winery**. Growing up in the wine industry, he watched those who were successful in the business, people like **Andre Tchelistcheff, Mike Grgich, Joe Heitz, Dan Duckhorn** and **John Williams**. He owns a successful vineyard management company, which planted and farms each vineyard used for his wines at **John Anthony Vineyards**.

## According to Truchard:

“We are trying to make a big, rich, creamy style of Sauvignon Blanc. We want to limit pyrazine aromas and flavors and move to more tropical character with more weight while retaining acidity. In effect, we are making Sauvignon Blanc for Chardonnay lovers.



“Church Vineyard sits at about 155 feet with vine spacings of 10x5 feet. Soils are Cole silt loam. We have Western Clone 1 and Musqué 317 on 1103 P rootstock, which makes for vigorous vines. We have irrigation, and the vineyard is sustainably farmed. Over 75 percent of the vineyard is quadrilateral cordon. Because it is a cool site and wants to retain those pyrazines, we have only two clusters per shoot max, with one cluster

on short shoots. We do heavy and early leafing in the fruit zone, stripping the east side and trying to maintain dappled sunlight on the west side. The vineyard is 4 to 28 acres and usually gives between 24 to 28 tons, depending on cluster size in any given vintage.

“We pick primarily based on flavor. The Clone 1 retains grassy aromas and flavors, along with bell pepper. We wait until that is gone and shifts to stone fruit character. The Musqué changes more quickly. We use a host winery, so picking has to be coordinated, but still those pyrazines are the key to the picking decision. We usually pick around 25.5° Brix.

“Grapes are hand-picked at night to half-ton bins. We might sort in the vineyard but not at the winery. They are whole-cluster pressed with 25 ppm SO<sub>2</sub> added to the press pan. We cold stabilize at 50° F from 24 to 72 hours. We will add 0.35g/L tartaric acid at racking from the settling tank, along with a 1.5 percent water addition. The wine goes to French oak barrels: 40 percent new, 40 percent once used and 20 percent neutral. VL3 yeast is added to the barrels. We will re-hydrate and add 2 lbs./1,000 gals Micro Essential at first sign of yeast activity then 2 lbs./k at one-third Brix depletion. Fermentation usually begins by day three, beginning at 55° F and going up to 65° F by the time it finishes. We top the barrels as fermentation continues but don’t want to overflow barrels.



## Tasting Notes

**TRUCHARD:** First off, I get the vanilla from the oak. Then there is some key lime and a sort of bruised nectarine—like that ripe one that drips down your chin when you bite into it. I get the gooseberry and the passion fruit undertones. It is rich and big, weighty, with oak and tropical flavors. It is what we are trying to do.

**BIAGI:** There is still some pyrazine, like green apple Jolly Ranchers, almost like a crab apple, and it is really pretty. Then it goes into cream pie. This is the style you want, and you killed it. I love the wood. It makes the wine creamy and lush. It is almost like a piña colada in the mouth.

**WEINKAUF:** I enjoy it for the style. You get all of the barrel influence, but it still has an acid drive that makes it mouth-filling but keeps it fresh. There is length and overall balance. This is big and oaky, but still crisp and not cloying.

**BELAIR:** You hit the nail on the head stylistically. These wines show the versatility of Sauvignon Blanc. The oak is dominant with vanilla, cardamom and almost baking spice. I also get an underlying tart rhubarb, almost red fruit character. The mid-palate is all there. A great job for the style.

**ROCHIOLI:** This is more pungent. It is slightly herbal coming across as cooked pepper but not negatively, not lacking freshness, just more pungent. The palate is very intense with brisk flavors of apple and citrus. This is fuller bodied than the others in this flight, but I don’t think there is RS.

**NORELLI:** It has a lot of oak in it, enough to be oak dominant with crème brûlée notes. It is pretty round and full in the mouth without being sweet. It finishes dry. As the oak diminishes with time, more fruit flavors should come out.

**BELL:** For me, the aroma and flavor were oak, toast and vanilla, and that oak lent it some creaminess and breadth in the mouth. It had some tartness to it as well. Repeated tasting revealed some Meyer lemon.

**COWLEY:** This has the most developed color. There are toasty, cedar oak aromas and flavors. It has some concentration and broad flavors, but is dominated by oak on both the nose and the palate.

**GIBSON:** More color with obvious oak. It has a luscious nose and by the look of it plenty of work in the cellar. It is creamy, leesy and aromatic. Chardonnay-esque palate. Plenty of wood leads to a lingering finish. Ripe and quite big and fat in a particular style.



“Once fermentation is finished, we will top the barrels and stir lees weekly, hoping to encourage malolactic. We do not add SO<sub>2</sub> until we rack for bottling. We achieve cold stability via Carboxymethyl Cellulose (CMC) and use bentonite for heat stability. We cross-flow and sterile filter and give the wine three months in bottle before release.”

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**SAUVIGNON BLANC IS A** triple threat grape variety. It allows winemakers to challenge themselves and craft uniquely styled wines, gives consumers an elegant, food-friendly wine that is affordable and sends accountants home to their ledgers happy. Sauvignon Blanc seems to grow well in different climates and soil conditions. It ripens early in the harvest season and benefits from long days in the sunlight. The vines are vigorous, producing grapes of good quality even at relatively high tonnages.

Because of its ability to set good-sized crops while maintaining quality and its relatively low price per ton, Sauvignon Blanc remains a bargain for wineries to purchase. It is a wine that gets bottled early and released soon after being bottled, so cash flow is excellent. It can be delicious in a wide range of styles and still sell at very reasonable prices, especially when the quality level is considered. Sauvignon Blanc is low cost, turns quickly, provides good cash flow and is competitively priced. It is the “perfect storm” varietal.

Sauvignon Blanc can produce wines that are interesting, elegant and classic. Tasting these nine wines allowed us to sample wildly different styles. All of the wines were refreshing, with good acidity and a wide range of aromas and flavors, but remained complex as well. We tasted some wines that were beautifully aromatic, ranging from green floral notes all the way to tropical. Some had subtle reductive complexity while others showed richness from sitting on lees or resting in oak barrels. It became clear that Sauvignon Blanc was a varietal that allowed winemakers to dial in their personal styles and make serious statements about what they wanted their wine to be.

One thing you cannot get away from in any discussion of Sauvignon Blanc is its value to quality ratio. We were fortunate in this Varietal Focus to have the participation of many renowned producers of Sauvignon

Blanc. As the winemakers pointed out, we were tasting some of the finest Sauvignon Blancs available, and they were priced the same as most entry level Chardonnays. The complex flavors of the wine, along with the wide range of individual styles, make Sauvignon Blanc an enticing choice at the table. It shows great versatility with most foods and can make a fine meal at a great restaurant more enjoyable because of its reasonable price. **WBM**

**AUTHOR'S NOTE:** For this Varietal Focus, we included wineries from New Zealand. The logistics involved were complicated, and we would not have been able to succeed without the help of John Kemble. We'd like to thank John for his help and participation in this project.



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