

IDLEWILD

2018 Flora & Fauna White Wine, North Coast

Vineyard

Flora and Fauna loosely means the collection of plant and animal life of a certain epoch. In my version, it is the collection of varietals from the cellar that make up the blend for the year. For 2018, the blend compromises of roughly 50% Muscat Canelli (a.k.a Muscat Blanc, Moscato Bianco), 48% Arneis, and 2% Cortese. The Muscat Canelli comes from two sites: well drained volcanic soils on the southwest edge of Lake County and the high altitude schist and sandstone of Wild Ruth Ranch. The Arneis comes from both Wild Ruth Ranch and Fox Hill Vineyard's well drained river bed based soils with high concentrations of gravel and sandstone. And, the Cortese comes from Fox Hill Vineyard as well.

Vintage

2018 was a dream vintage. There just aren't many other ways to say it. There weren't any surprises or issues, and the cadence of the season was easy. While the summer months were quite warm, the fall was borderline cool. This all translates to the most balanced fruit seen in years. The vintage did extend quite a long time due to the cool fall, but for those of us who favor both high acidity and depth of flavor, there couldn't have been a better scenario.

Winemaking

Winemaking starts in the vineyard, and my preference is to work with sites that require minimal to no work. In other words, the basics done right and well timed are all a great site needs. When that is the case, the winemaking becomes a simple game of guiding the fruit to be what it already is. I time picking for this blend to when the core of the wine's pieces overlay into a balance of bright acidity with emerging tones of aromatic depth. From there, the grapes were whole cluster pressed, fermented via native yeasts, left on all the lees and solids, aged in neutral oak, and underwent native secondary fermentation. Complexity and texture are gained from allowing secondary fermentation and aging on lees in neutral oak for four months, while the structure and acidity from picking plenty early allow for great vibrancy and energy through the wine.

Wine

This is such a fun wine to make. The explosive aromatics of Muscat Canelli fill the cellar, but upon tasting the juice, the balance of the early take of Arneis shows the structural bones. The wine is highlighted by honey, wildflowers, wet stones, salty air, jasmine, and orange blossoms. The mouth feel is shaped like a diamond: lean on the front, a touch of oiliness and richness through the mid, and then racy and driving through the finish.

11.7% alc by vol.