



## 2007 SAUVIGNON BLANC SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

### VINEYARD NOTES

Star Lane Vineyard, located at the far eastern end of the Santa Ynez Valley, is both the warmest and the highest elevation vineyard in the appellation. Backing up to the lower slopes of the San Rafael Mountains, which loom high above the ranch, Star Lane features a unique range of weathered sand, gravel and alluvial cobbles over a clay/loam subsoil. With both excellent drainage and good water holding capacity in the subsoil, these conditions mimic those of the best properties of Bordeaux and are an ideal home for our small block of Sauvignon Blanc. At the southern-most end of our canyon, this block benefits from a stronger maritime influence than the rest of the ranch, promoting even ripening and racy acidity in the wines. The Sauvignon Blanc at Star Lane is typically picked a full week in advance of our neighbors' and lends itself to a powerful yet balanced style of wine.

### WINEMAKING NOTES

Building upon the significant progress made with our Sauvignon Blanc in the 2006 vintage, our 2007 demonstrates the remarkable results of further refinement in viticultural and winemaking practices. '07 was our first vintage of farming the Sauvignon Blanc 100% organically, and I feel strongly that it shows in the wine. Although the vineyard looks a little less "manicured" since we've abandoned the use of herbicides, there is a new life and vibrancy to the fruit, and the wine is more soulful for it. In the winery, we've increased our use of warm fermentations, often peaking near 80 degrees F, to now include the entire production. New oak has returned as part of our winemaking protocol, total 10% of the total volume in the blend, and we've settled on 400 liter steam bent barrels from the Dargaud & Jaegle cooperage. Finally, picking parameters for the skin contact portion of the blend as low as 19 degrees brix (roughly 11.8% potential alcohol), bring an intensely fragrant element to the wine.

Picking commenced in late August at 20.5° brix (roughly 12.7% potential alcohol) and continued over a period of 10 days, with our final lots entering the winery at 23.5° brix (14.5% potential alcohol). Early lots were whole-clus-

ter pressed, raked from their heaviest solids and transferred to 55 gallon stainless steel barrels for fermentation. The following third of the grapes were handled in the same fashion, but transferred to 360 gallons stainless tanks for fermentation. The stainless fermented lots in '07 were inoculated with selected yeasts from the Loire Valley and allowed to ferment at elevated temperatures. The final, ripest lots were settled only minimally after pressing and were fermented in barrels, 10% new, with wild yeast. Finally, 10% of the tank lots received skin contact treatment for 14 hours. Lees of all lots were stirred bi-weekly and malolactic fermentation was blocked.

Bottled unfiltered after 10 months on fermentation lees, our 2007 Sauvignon Blanc demonstrates the power of natural farming and creative winemaking.

### TASTING NOTES

Stainless steel lots bring vivid aromas of wild spring flowers, gooseberries and mandarin orange, while the wood lots contribute the rich lemon curd and grapefruit aromas that have been the hallmark of Star Lane Sauvignon Blanc. On the palate, the lots fermented in tank and stainless barrels offer a sense of balance and poise and barrel fermentation presents a mouthfeel marked by breathtaking depth. With plenty of natural acidity keeping things vibrant and structured, our 2007 is delicious now with the freshest of shellfish and will improve with up to 6 years in the cellar.

### VINTAGE NOTES

Drought-level rainfall and severe winter freezes during the December holidays started the growing season in an atypical fashion. Many young shoots were stunted due to the freezes and only began to show acceptable vigor when we plowed under our "green manure" cover crop consisting of oats, bell beans, vetch and peas in late spring. Conditions during bloom time were ideal, with moderate temperatures and an absence of our normal winds, and completed in less than a week. Meanwhile, set was erratic from shoot to shoot, with some shoots setting as many as three clusters while others set none. In spite of low winter rainfall, weather during the growing season was generally cool and we irrigated very little, only 2 to 5 gallons per vine for the entire season. Veraison was very even and weather during harvest was warm and steady. We harvested a slightly below average crop load at a leisurely pace from late August through mid November.

### FINISHED WINE

Composition: 100% Sauvignon Blanc  
Appellation: Santa Ynez Valley  
Alcohol: 13.6%  
Total Acid: 9.2 g/L  
pH: 3.18

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VINEYARD

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