

SPOTTSWOODE

Harvest 2021

Spottswode Sauvignon Blanc

By Aron Weinkauff, Winemaker

WHILE THE 2021 Sauvignon Blanc vintage in Napa Valley and Sonoma County has the potential to be exceptional, achieving this goal in light of 2021 being the second drought year in a row required exacting attention in the vineyards. The main story of the vintage was its lack of precipitation. After receiving some much-needed rainfall in November and December of 2020, the winter and spring of 2021 were quite dry, and overall precipitation was just 12 to 13 inches for the entire year in many parts of wine country. To increase soil fertility, we proactively irrigated our vineyards early, while significantly pruning back our canopies and pruning our vines to fewer positions. We also cultivated our cover crops early, short-mowing from the start to reduce overall competition for water.

After a warm January and February, we experienced a cold spell in March, which pushed back budbreak. Then the weather soon warmed, which resulted in quite a short period between budbreak and bloom. In addition to being highly targeted with our irrigation, we were also proactive with organic fertilization to spur overall growth. While the weather for the rest of the season was fairly warm, we had few significant heat spells. Most periods of hot weather lasted no more than two or three days.

The first fruit harvested for our 2021 Sauvignon Blanc was the old-vine Sémillon from the Tofanelli Vineyard in Calistoga. Because Tofanelli's old 1970s vines are dry farmed, the roots penetrate deep into the earth, ensuring that the plants have access to water during the dry growing season. On August 16, our Spottswode Estate Vineyard was the next site harvested. As the backbone for our 2021 Sauvignon Blanc, this fruit brings great beauty and balance to the final wine, as well as excellent underlying energy and acidity. Harvest continued next at Pelkan Vineyard in Knights Valley. Grown on a north-facing, 40-degree slope, Pelkan's Sauvignon Blanc benefited from good soil moisture, producing grapes with ideal acidity and lovely floral notes. From there, the next vineyard picked was the organically certified Murray Vineyard on Sonoma Mountain, where our collaborative efforts to create impeccably balanced vines yielded an equally balanced crop of high quality Sauvignon Blanc. As harvest drew to a close, we picked Hyde Vineyard in Carneros, Farina Vineyard on

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Sonoma Mountain, and Stagecoach Vineyard and the organically certified Edcora Vineyard on Atlas Peak. While water issues at Hyde severely limited the amount of fruit we received, the cool climate of the organically farmed Farina Vineyard produced stunning fruit with amazing richness, density, and texture. Yields were low at Stagecoach, though the quality and concentration of its fruit was excellent. As our last vineyard picked, the high-mountain Edcora Vineyard ended our Sauvignon Blanc harvest on a high note, yielding intense grapes with graceful aromas and lovely natural acidity.

Overall, the dry weather of 2021 produced smaller canopies, clusters, and berries. As a result, while our yields were down by as much as 40%, the quality and concentration of the fruit was excellent. Consequently, while there will be less of the 2021 Sauvignon Blanc available, it has the potential to be among the finest vintages in recent years.

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