

Margins 'Carmel Valley Chenin Blanc' 2020

Producer - Megan Bell

Provenance: Carmel Valley, California

Farming: Certified organic since 1996

Grape(s): 100% Chenin Blanc

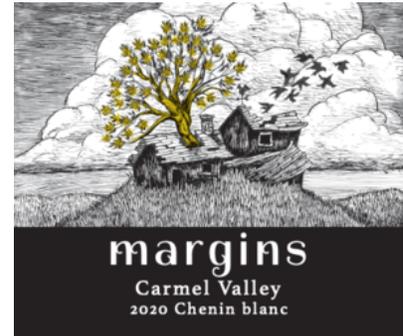
Vineyard: Massa Vineyard - coastal, sandy soils with much more drastic diurnal shift than her Clarksburg vineyard resulting in harvest 2 months later.

Vintage: In 2020, Megan doubled her production, moved to a new winery and was forced to evacuate her home due to wildfires just after the first pick. The growing season also presented challenges with heatwaves and a powdery mildew pressure across the Santa Cruz Mountains, she was obliged to pick earlier and find ways to manage alkalinity.

Fermentation/ Aging: whole cluster pressed into steel for fermentation. Aged in a 50/50 mix of stainless steel and neutral oak for 9 months, weekly battonage for the first six weeks.

Fining/ filtration: none.

Sulfur: 20 ppm a week before bottling



The Producer:

“Complicated things don’t really interest me,” Megan muses “I want wine to be thought of as something that’s very not complicated - that’s something that affected me a lot at the beginning.” Megan’s interest in wine grew out of high-school brewing experiments to studies at UC Davis. From the beginning she found the pall of mystery that hung over wine to be discouraging and totally unnecessary. Her project, initially funded through a crowdsourcing campaign, is dedicated to the less evangelized regions of California and their scrappy mom ‘n pop vineyards.

The Vineyard:

The Chenin Blanc comes from Massa Vineyard in the Carmel Valley, essentially the back side of Big Sur. Megan pulls from a 3 acre block of Chenin amidst the sprawling 88 acre vineyard planted in 1968. Located at elevations of 1200-1500 ft, 10 miles from the coast as the crow flies, the sandy vineyard site is extremely hot during the day but cooling breezes from the ocean result in cold, foggy nights. Although Megan picks both her Clarksburg and Carmel Valley Chenin at the same brix level, Massa vineyard takes two months longer to ripen properly. The clusters are smaller and much tighter. The resulting wine is much more full

palette - less linear and mineral than clarksburg. “Carmel has sandy notes,” Megan says, “but it’s more stone fruit vibes and honey.”

2020 was an especially challenging year for Megan. She moved into a new winery space with a friend which brought with it the joys of permitting and licensing paperwork, and doubled her production from 1,000 cases to 2,000 cases without hiring additional help. ‘I didn’t quite realize how much that was going to be for one person’ she told us. To further complicate matters the neighborhood where she lives was evacuated due to wildfires after the very first pick. With 27 tons left to pick and process, Megan was living in a friend’s guest room while managing a new workflow in a new space.

The growing season also presented challenges with heatwaves frontloading pick dates to catch as much acidity as possible. Despite all this Megan highlights that she thinks “quality was outstanding for white wines in 2020.”

The Winery:

Whole cluster pressed into steel tank for spontaneous fermentation. Because the Carmel fruit is so much richer, Megan aged the wine 50% in steel rather than entirely neutral barrel. After 9 months aging, base wines are racked into tank with an addition of 20 ppm sulfite and bottled a week after without fining or filtration.

For more details email info@OlmsteadWine.com

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