

Clos Saron 'Camptonville Folly' 2017

Producer: Gideon Beinstock

Provenance: North Yuba AVA, Oregon House, California (Sierra Foothills)

Farming: Not farmed - the vineyard is essentially feral

Grape(s): 100% Gewurztraminer

Vineyard(s): A single, untended vineyard with granite and slate soils.

Fermentation/ Aging: hand harvested grapes are foot crushed in whole clusters and fermented in polyethylene harvest bins. Macerated for about 6 days depending on development with once daily punchdowns. Pressed into neutral french oak barrels.

Fining/ Filtration: none.

Sulfur: 35 ppm at bottling.



The Producer:

Given the meteoric thrust of the natural wine 'scene' there are all manner of ideologies being thrown about that tend to paint American naturalists in a reactionary hue. Clos Saron is emblematic of an older, more contemplative approach that finds itself in the natural camp because, well, that's the best way to express a sense of place! Israeli ex-pat Gideon Beinstock is a consummate terroir-ist whose discomfort with the definition of 'winemaker' stems not from radical minimalism for its own sake but from the simple fact that he spends nearly all his time farming and very little in the cellar.

Even setting aside the historicity of the project, Clos Saron is remarkable. The winery has never stopped evolving, continuing to explore ideas of ripeness, cofermentation and sulfite application in thoughtful ways despite decades of successful production. The wines are monolithic embodiments of North Yuba's scorching, iron-laden granitic terroir. They have potency in the manner of the southern French masters - presence and assertiveness couched in the language heat and earth.

The Vineyard

The vineyard for the 'Camptonville Folly' is a 'happily neglected' vineyard not far from Clos Saron, kept as an amusing side curiosity for a group of Marijuana growers. The vineyard is essentially left wild: no irrigation, no pruning, no nothing. The vineyard was planted to Gewurztraminer and Pinot Noir but given the 'hands off' approach the Pinot is usually destroyed by mildew. Soils are slate and granite.

The Cellar

Gideon's approach to white grapes is usually the same for reds so, yes, this could be called 'orange' wine though he tends to press whites a tad earlier than reds.

Whole clusters are completely crushed by foot (no intracellular 'carbonic' effect) in polyethylene harvest bins. Once a day manual punch downs are conducted using a peicemail tool made of a piece of pvc piping and a stainless steel rod but they are meant only to keep the cap hydrated and NOT to enhance extraction. Each ferment is pressed according to its specific development, with macerations usually ranging from 6-11 days before pressing. The wine ages in mostly French oak barrels of at least 10 years of age.

Although Gideon has experimented with zero and extremely low sulfur wines, he has found that mouse is too much a distraction and his approach to sulfur has changed over the years. He started with 35 ppm added at crush with a period in the middle trying to use almost none and has fallen into an equilibrium between the two. Lab results from his bottled wines reveal almost no 'free sulfur' remaining. During the period of time he made this wine, the approach was to only add SO₂ 24 hours before bottling at the same moment the wine was racked away from the gross lees into tank for short settling before bottling.

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