

Leo Steen Wines

2019 Chenin Blanc, Peaberry - Mendocino County

Release Date: Spring 2020

Production: 300 cases

Vineyard: This wine comes from a vineyard located in the Southern-eastern hills of Ukiah. Planted in the mid-1970s on a gentle slope in Pinole gravelly loam soils, the sites old Chenin Blanc vines yield tiny, beautifully concentrated berries - thus the name Peaberry.

Harvest: The 2019 growing season was ideal and produced another exceptional vintage. A very wet winter followed by heat early in the season allowed the grapes to mature slowly without heat stress. The crop load was normal with excellent quality. This growing season had all the important marks spot on from bud-break to flowering and harvest. We hand picked our Peaberry Chenin Blanc on September 18th at 20.6 Brix to preserve the high natural acidity.

Fermentation: The clusters were sorted - 76% whole cluster pressed to tank for cold settling, and 24% de-stemmed. The pressed juice was racked to neutral French oak barrels for fermentation using spontaneous yeast. The de-stemmed portion was fermented in puncheon and spent 10 days on the skin before racking and light pressing using a basket press.

Cellar Notes: The wine was aged for five months with complete spontaneous malolactic fermentation in French oak barrels. This wine was bottled without fining and filtration and the use of sulphur, in March of 2020.

Technical Notes:

Alcohol: 12.0%

pH: 3.26

Total acid: 6.1 g/l

Malolactic Fermentation: 100%

Tasting Notes: This wine displays lovely aromas of dried quince, apricot with subtle notes of mint and lemon peel. The aromas are echoed on the palate, where they mingle with savory elements of almond skin and fleur de sel. While a hint of creaminess on the palate helps to balance the acidity, this is a wine that is defined by its acidity, nerve and phenolic structure. Due to this natural style of winemaking this wine will have a slightly hazy appearance.

Vision: In many ways, it is only fitting that the centerpiece of my winemaking efforts are Chenin Blancs. Steen is my family's middle name, and it is also the South African word for Chenin Blanc. I have long been fascinated by this sleek and elegant variety. Our Peaberry Chenin Blanc is my version of a natural wine. Picked at very low Brix, it is a rustic, low alcohol expression of the grape that will pair beautifully with an array of cuisines.

