

Leo Steen Wines

2019 Saini Farms, Chenin Blanc - Dry Creek Valley

Release Date: Spring 2020

Production: 672 cases

Vineyard: After years of searching for just the right Chenin Blanc to work with, I found what I was looking for in the 39-year-old vines of Saini Farms in Dry Creek Valley. Planted in Yolo sandy loam soils on an old river bottom site, these dry-farmed vines produce grapes that capture the fresh, enticing purity that can be achieved when Chenin Blanc is grown with care and respect.

Harvest: The 2019 growing season produced another exceptional vintage, where bud-break, flowering and harvest was back to normal timing. After a very wet winter followed by heat early in the season the grapes were allowed to mature slowly without heat stress. The crop load was normal for the Saini Vineyard and quality was excellent, with healthy canopies maintaining a high acidity level. Further to preserve the high natural acidity that defines this wine, we hand picked our Saini Chenin Blanc in two passes on September 5 & 10th at average brix at 21.5.

Fermentation: After gently breaking the berries, the grapes underwent 2 to 3 hours of skin contact prior to pressing. The wine was fermented in stainless steel using indigenous yeast for approximately one month until complete dryness.

Cellar Notes: 85% of the wine was transferred to neutral French oak, with the remaining 15% placed in a concrete egg, with both aged for five months on fine lees. The final wine was blended in tank in March 2020.

Technical Notes:

Alcohol: 13.0%

pH: 3.41

Total acid: 6.0 g/l

Malolactic fermentation: 65%

Tasting Notes: This wine has alluring weight and richness, a silky texture and notes of aromas of green pear, white pepper, Chamomile, and mint. The palate offers a medley of white flower, lemon salt, and almond notes, that carry through to a lingering refreshing finish with subtle mineral notes.

Vision: In many ways, it is only fitting that the centerpiece of my winemaking efforts is a bone-dry Chenin Blanc. 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 varietal. To make this wine, I sought out the oldest Chenin Blanc vines in Dry Creek Valley. In the winery, I strive to be true to the varietal and craft a fresh, lively wine with the ability to complement an array of modern cuisine.

