

Davis Family Vineyards

2004 GUSTO Sauvignon Blanc

Sauvignon Blanc is grown in more appellations around the world than any other grape. If planted in the right vineyards it can be the best varietal at giving a sense of place to the aromas and flavors of the wine. I made Sauvignon Blanc for years in California, it has always been a favorite wine to drink because of its crisp, refreshing character. I have always preferred my Sauvignon Blanc in the more vibrant style, without the heavy character of oak barrels, a style I started to admire coming out of New Zealand wineries in the 90's.

The seasons in New Zealand are opposite those here in the Northern Hemisphere so when my California vineyards are sleepy and quiet awaiting Spring in February and early March the grapes are ripening in New Zealand's Fall season! In 1998 I arranged to work the harvest in the Northern tip of New Zealand's South Island in a region called Marlborough.

I went to study and experience the winemaking styles and techniques but what I discovered is a microclimate that turns the Sauvignon Blanc grape into distinctive and delicious flavor reflections. The Cook's Straight that separates New Zealand's 2 islands is a constant funnel of marine breezes ever cooling the coastal vineyards. The soils are rich in calcareous deposits, the benefit of the island geography. This translates into vigorous vines and long growing seasons - layers of aromas and flavors that push the envelope on true Sauvignon varietal character.

Since that first harvest I have stopped making Sauvignon Blanc in California and return each and every vintage to craft a reflection of Marlborough. I have secured grapes from 2 of the older vineyards in New Zealand both planted in the 1970's by true pioneers in the Kiwi wine industry. The first block is right on the coast in a sub appellation called Brancott - this piece keeps very crisp acidity and pronounced aromas of fresh herbs. The second vineyard is about 10 miles inland from the first in another sub appellation called Rapaura. This vineyard is slightly warmer and dryer and gets flavors of grapefruit, passion fruit and other tropical notes like guava and lime depending on the vintage. That Rapaura vineyard also gets riper so the acidity is tamed a bit and the body of the wine is more mouthcoating.

I craft the two blocks separately in individual stainless steel tanks at very low temperatures to highlight and never mask the character of each vineyard. Once the fermentation is finished I return back to California to begin farming the new vintage in the Russian River Valley. In the middle of our summer I return to New Zealand to assemble a final blend of the two tanks - a layered combination that creates a harmony between the tropical notes and the fresh herbs,-- the bright, crisp acidity and the rich mouthcoating texture that leaves the flavors hanging on your palate. A unique, exciting expression that can be achieved no other way and from no other place. I bottle the wine there in New Zealand and bring the entire vintage of **GUSTO** back to the states to share.

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