

WINE BUSINESS MONTHLY

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VARIETAL FOCUS:

PINOT BLANC

PLUS: Smoke Exposure:
How to Determine if Fruit
Has Been Compromised

2020 UNIFIED GUIDE

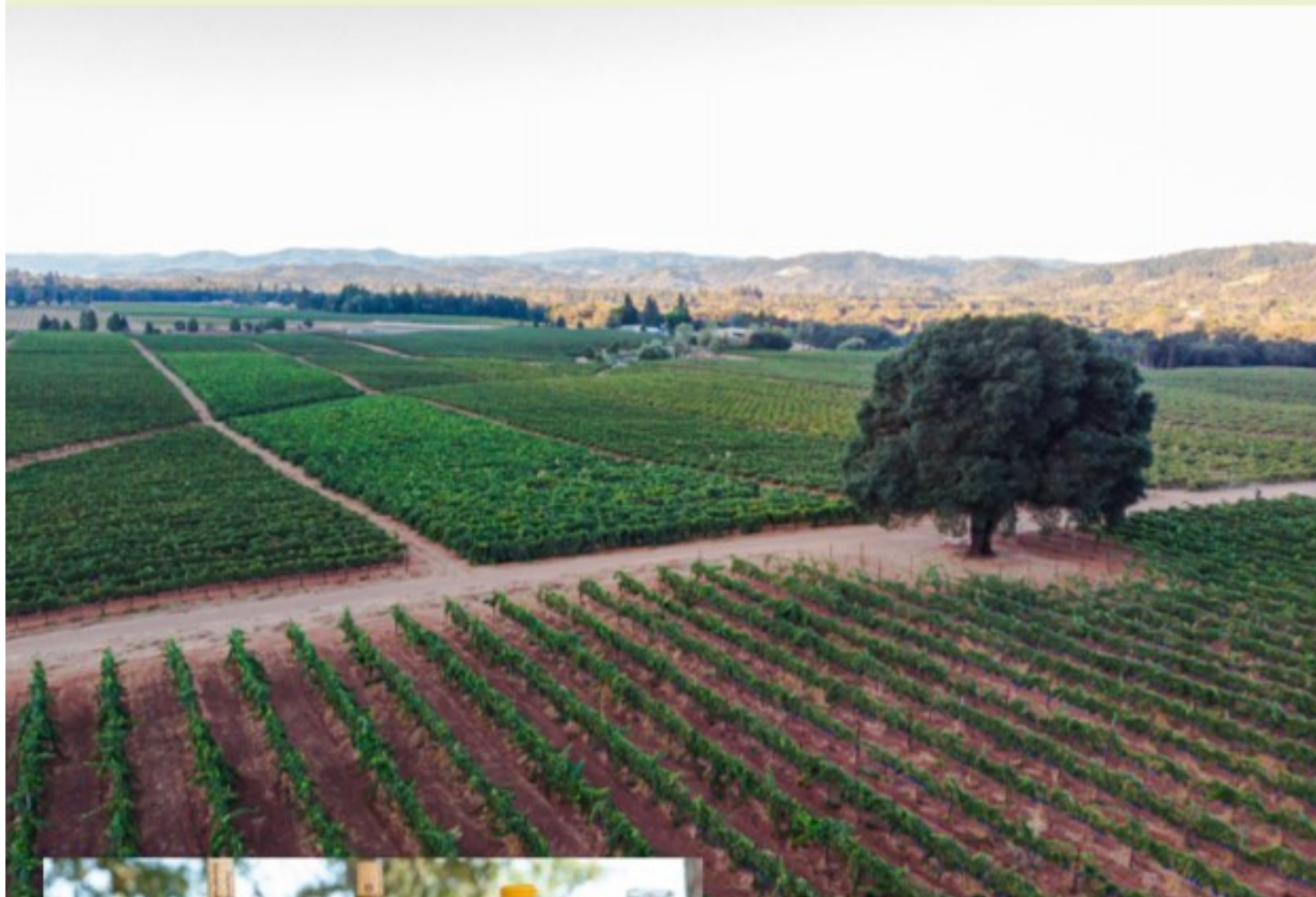
A preview of the Unified Wine & Grape Symposium

VARIETAL FOCUS:

PINOT BLANC

MENDOCINO COUNTY

Thirty years ago, little Pinot Blanc was grown in California, just 2,500 acres. Since then, things have gotten much worse: Currently, only 425 acres are remain throughout the state, and Mendocino County has just 25 total acres of Pinot Blanc.



GRASOLE VINEYARDS

Barra Girasole of Mendocino Redwood Valley Vineyards



BARRA

VARIETAL FOCUS:
**PINOT
BLANC**
DATA SHEET

Mendocino

Winery	GIRASOLE VINEYARDS	RIVINO WINERY	NAVARRO VINEYARDS
Wine	2018 Girasole Vineyards Pinot Blanc	2017 RIVINO Estate Pinot Blanc	2018 Pinot Blanc
Winemaker	Randy Meyer	Jason McConnell	Jim Klein
Style Goals	Semi-dry with clean, crisp flavors of apple, melon and citrus. No oak influence with good mouthfeel. A balanced wine that is not too sweet and not too dry.	Light and crisp with naturally high acid and low alcohol. Citrus and stone fruit with a clean finish.	Tropical fruit with peach. Dry with mineral elements, blended with Chardonnay for length and weight.
AVA	Mendocino County	Mendocino County	Mendocino
Vineyard	Redwood Valley Vineyards	Rivino Estate Vineyard	Rivino Vineyard and Navarro Home Ranch
Vineyard Data			
Predominant Geology (soil type)	Pinole, redvine soil	Alluvial river bottom	70% Russian loam, 30% Boontling loam
Elevation	825 feet	600 feet	560/260 feet
Vine Spacing	6 feet x 10 feet	7 feet x 8 feet	5 x 8 feet and 3 x 8 feet
Rootstock	St. George	3309	504
Clones	Old vines unknown from Wente; in 2015 clone 54 or 55	59	ENTAV-INRA 54, FPS 6
Irrigation or Dry-farmed	Irrigated	Irrigated	Irrigated
Farming (organic, Biodynamic, traditional)	California Certified Organic (CCOF) and vegan friendly	Traditional	Traditional at Rivino, sustainable at Navarro
Production	4 tons per acre	6.5 tons per acre	6 tons per acre at Rivino; 1.5 tons per acre at Navarro
When to Pick	TA, pH, Brix, color and taste; Look for viscous pulp, ease of berry removal from pedicel	Brix and taste; looking for a split of harder greener clusters and softer yellow clusters to give a nice balance; usually around 21° Brix	Target Brix for lower alcohol; concentrate on flavor; watch fruit condition
Vineyard Practices	Crown-suckering, shoot-thin and shoot-position; pull leaves, vertical trellis, deficit irrigation; cover crops cultivated with hoe plow; pomace cooked and turned back to vineyards	Pull leaves on morning sun side and try to keep deer away	Pull leaves on morning side, cane-cut and first leaf-pull mechanically; Home Ranch pull leaves
Winemaking Data			
Sort	Field-sorted	None	No
SO ₂	20 ppm at crusher, 30 ppm post-primary fermentation	30 ppm	None at crush, 50 ppm after fermentation
Crush, Destem, Press	Destem straight to press	Whole cluster press	Crushed, destemmed and pressed immediately
Settling	48 hours at 50° F then add 2 lbs. bentonite after racking off lees	3 to 5 days at 40° F	48 hours at 42° F
Yeast	Maurivin AWRI 350	Elixir	QA23
Nutrients	Fermaid 2133 organic	If needed	Argilact (bentonite casein) pre-fermentation, DAP and FermK at 20 percent fermentation
Acid Addition	3 g/L	None	Rivino add 1.5 g/L to 6.6 g/L and 3.3 pH; Home fruit no addition
Fermentation Temperature	60° F to 62° F	Start 55° F, drop to 40° F then raise slowly back to 55° F	52° F to 55° F
Fermentation Manipulation	Laffort Fresharom to lower SO ₂ usage	Slow and cold	None
Tank Types	Stainless steel	Stainless steel	Stainless steel
Barrel Fermentation	None	None	Moved to neutral puncheons on light lees post-fermentation
Barrels Used	None	None	500 L Tonnellerie Bilon puncheons, 4 to 10 years
Stir Lees	No	No	Twice a month
Racking	Once post-primary to get off heavy lees	After primary fermentation	Off light lees and to bottle
Cold Stability	Add KHT and chill to 31° F	28° F for 6 weeks or as needed	10 to 14 days at 32° F
Heat Stability	Bentonite 3 lbs. per 1,000 gallons	Bentonite at juice stage	Bentonite
Filtration	Sterile-filtered	Plate and frame to sterile	DE, .45 micron at bottling
Closure	Screen cap	Engineered cork	Micro-agglomerated cork
Bottle Age Before Release	2 weeks	Few months to get through bottle shock	6 weeks

VARIETAL FOCUS:

PINOT BLANC

GIRASOLE VINEYARDS

2018 Girasole Pinot Blanc

Randy Meyer is responsible for making wine from more than 9,000 tons of grapes annually at **Barra Redwood Valley Cellars**. A graduate of **UC Davis** with a degree in fermentation science, he worked at **Korbel Champagne Cellars** for 23 years. He served as senior winemaker with **Draxton Wines** for eight years. In June 2019, Meyer started as director of winemaking and operations for **BARRA of Mendocino/Girasole Vineyards**, as well as the Barra Redwood Valley Cellars' custom crush facility.



ACCORDING TO MEYER:

"Our goal for Girasole is to produce a fresh, crisp, brightly balanced version of Pinot Blanc at a reasonable price point. We get flavors of apple, melon and citrus by picking a bit riper. There is no oak influence, and we strive for good mouthfeel and balance—a wine that is neither too sweet nor too dry and finishes with a crisp, dry finish.

"Girasole comes from a vineyard that has Pinole and Redvine soil. It sits at an elevation of 824 feet. Rows are planted using 6 foot by 10 foot spacing; all vines are on St. George rootstock. The old vines are unknown clones but believed to be the very aromatic Melon Clone (which is not a true Pinot Blanc). The 8 acres planted in 2015 use Clone 54 or 55. The vineyard is irrigated and certified by the **California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF)**.

"There is a tremendous amount of hand work done on the vines, including crown-suckering, shoot-thinning, shoot-positioning, fruit-dropping and leaf-pulling. Vines are vertically trellised. Cover crops are planted in the fall,

and cultivation is performed with a hoe plow. No pesticides, herbicides or non-organic fertilizers are used in the vineyard. Pomace is turned to compost and returned to the vineyards. We irrigate to keep the vines healthy and green, cut canes late to facilitate picking and harvest yields about 4 tons per acre.

"We pick based on the sugar balance but watch TA, pH and Brix progression during ripening. We look for a viscous pulp and the ease of berry removal from pedicel. We prefer a riper style and wait for flavors to develop, knowing full well that we will need to make acid additions, especially to the Melon Clone grapes.

"Grapes are hand-picked and field-sorted. We destem straight to the press without crushing but add 20 ppm SO₂. Juice is cold-settled for 48 hours at 50° F and then racked. Bentonite is added at 2 pounds per 1,000 gallons after racking. Low solids are very important because we can't afford problems with H₂S due to being organic. We make our acid additions as much as 3 grams per liter if necessary. We use **Maurivin AWRI 350** yeast for its high ester character. Fermaid 2133 organic nutrient is added at 20° Brix. We use **Laffort Fresharom** to help lower our SO₂ usage. Wine ferments at 60° F to 62° F. These higher temperatures give us better mouthfeel.

"Wine is fermented in stainless steel tanks. No oak is used in the process. Post primary fermentation, the wine is racked off heavy lees.

We shoot for a residual sugar in the range of 2 to 3 grams per liter. Cold stability is achieved by chilling the wine with an addition of KHT. Heat stability is achieved using more bentonite. Wine is cross-flow- and sterile-filtered. Bottles are sealed by screw cap and aged for two weeks before release."

TASTING NOTES

MEYER: There is a considerable amount of stone fruit with that minerality, which defines Pinot Blanc. It has unripe apricot, some pear notes and almond husk. There is not a lot of stone fruit or tropical character, but there is some pear. The acidity is firm, and the RS adds mouthfeel and weight.

MCCONNELL: I get more orange and lemon on this. This has less acid than the Navarro, and that ends the finish more quickly. There is some green pear and some stone fruit. It has higher alcohol. It is clean and refreshing.

KLEIN: It is a riper style. We've moved into dry pear and orange zest. It is not cloying, but there is a definite sweetness that helps the wine finish with a punchy juiciness rather than crisp acidity.

DUMAYNE: High SO₂ on the nose. A bit lactic and cheesy. The length is great, and the texture is superb. Some deeper brown apple characters but without oxidative notes. Juicy and mouthwatering with great balance.

PIERSON: Bright citrus, mostly lime with apple. Nice acidity. Lovely citrus on the palate with a fresh, bright, acid finish.

LEITER: Pale lemon color. Sweet ripe stone fruit aromas with fresh peach, sweet lemon, pear and a hint of fresh herbs. Nice intensity, medium body. Slight astringency on the finish with nectarine lingering on the palate.

VOIT: Extremely aromatic and terpene-driven. I would be shocked if this was 100 percent Pinot Blanc. It is citrusy and grapefruity on the palate, but I can taste those terpene characters through on the palate. I think there is Muscat or Gewürztraminer in here. It is bright and acidic, but the fruit is so generous that it presents as sweet, even if the wine is not.

HOUSEMAN: I wrote Muscat twice. It has that Juicy Fruit gum thing and fruit cocktail. It tastes like there is some Muscat in here, and it is phenolic as well. It is fruit-forward. It reminds me of a white Alsace blend. It's pretty, and I like it. It has lots of melon with nice acidity, very generous fruit and a tiny bit of heat.

HUBATCH: It is nicely done, but it is more an aromatic white wine than Pinot Blanc. I enjoyed the wine. It was fresh and clean with pear, peach, white floral and a little apricot. Lots of aromatics that popped. Very clean on the palate with white peach, apricot, jasmine and great citrus. It is well-balanced, a little off-dry, very clean and focused.