



AMERICA'S GRAND WINE ESTATE

Niebaum-Coppola

In 1975, Francis and Eleanor Coppola purchased a majority of the historic Inglenook property in Rutherford. After three years of careful study and planning, they launched an ambitious venture to revitalize the great Cabernet heritage of Inglenook. In 1978, the newly formed Niebaum-Coppola Estate Winery created the first vintage of Rubicon, a proprietary red wine blend. When the remaining 90 acres of the Inglenook Estate came up for sale in 1995, the Coppolas succeeded in reuniting this legendary property.

Soon after the reunification of the Estate, Coppola decided to create a world-class proprietary white wine as a worthy partner to Rubicon. That wine is Blancaneaux, as captivating and expressive as its name. Literally meaning, "white waters" in French, Blancaneaux is a blend of Marsanne, Chardonnay, Roussanne, and Viognier, and is made from certified-organic grapes grown entirely on the Niebaum-Coppola Estate.

Vineyard Notes

Although Rutherford is Cabernet country, the six acres that are dedicated to growing white grapes have great morning sun, but are in full shade by mid-afternoon due to their proximity to Mt. St. John. Although not a good habitat for Cabernet, this location is the perfect place on the Estate to grow white varieties because the shade cools the vineyard and lengthens the growing season. Since 1994, Rhone varieties such as Marsanne, Roussanne, and Viognier have resided here, along with Dijon clones of Chardonnay.

Vintage Notes

Rutherford enjoyed a particularly successful harvest in 2002. A temperate growing season followed a late spring, allowing the grapes to mature at a slow, even pace right into fall. September saw a progressive cooling, prompting some in the valley to commence with picking before autumn rains could potentially dilute flavor concentration in the grapes. Chardonnay was harvested prior to Viognier in early September, just before the cool temperatures gave way to heat wave conditions the last week of September. Fortunately, the warm weather resulted in giving an extra push to the Marsanne and Roussanne grapes, ripening them to near perfection when harvested in October.

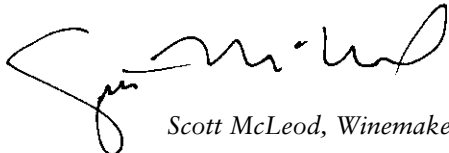
Winemaker's Notes

Blancaneaux is a blended wine for all the right reasons; the resulting wine is greater than the sum of all its parts. As separate components, the individual varieties appeal to simple pleasures. Blancaneaux, on the other hand, asserts a complex personality with depth of flavor and aroma. The varietal characteristics don't compete against one another, but rather mesh as one harmonious expression. In the 2002 vintage, Marsanne leads with its distinct mineral and honeydew melon aromas, and soft yet flinty palate. The Roussanne contributes fleshy peach and

apricot flavors, as well as a lush, firm texture that rounds and lengthens the finish. Viognier adds exotic ginger and spice to the blend, while Chardonnay delivers flavors of ripe pear and melon, and adds textural elements as a result of malolactic fermentation. Unlike other Rhone-style blends, it is the addition of Chardonnay that makes this wine a rare taste experience, wholly unique to Niebaum-Coppola.

Tasting Notes

One of my favorite aspects of Blancaneaux is its almost chameleon-like ability to change in the glass over time. The longer it sits in a glass, the more the pear and apple aromas rise, followed a few moments later by the earthy mineral characteristics. On the palate, initial flavors of pear and lilacs lead later to flavors of apricots and ginger. Because this is the first vintage where Marsanne was the dominant varietal, the wine is very reminiscent of the great white Rhone wines of France. The dramatic change in the blend this year is further proof that the vineyards are still changing, developing, and attempting to assert their own personalities. This phenomenon is likely to continue for years to come, which will necessitate a different balance of varieties every vintage. I am always amazed that the wine does not appear more oak influenced considering Blancaneaux is barrel fermented in 100% new French oak barrels and left alone for 12 months. But the fact that the wine does not show more barrel character is a testament to the weight of the wine, the success of blending four varieties, and, above all, a great vineyard.


Scott McLeod, Winemaker



2002 BLANCANEAUX

APPELLATION: RUTHERFORD, NIEBAUM-COPPOLA ESTATE	BARREL REGIMEN: 12 MONTHS IN NEW FRENCH OAK	TOTAL ACID: 0.60 G/100 ML	CASE PRODUCTION: 1,423 CASES (9.0 L)
VINEYARD: SADDLE VINEYARD	ALCOHOL: 14.1%	pH: 3.51	RELEASED: MARCH 15, 2004
BLEND: 43% MARSANNE, 30% CHARDONNAY, 16% ROUSSANNE, 11% VIOGNIER			BOTTLED: AUGUST 2003