



FROSTWATCH *Vineyard & Winery*

## Frostwatch 2017 Semillon

**Cases produced:** 55

**Composition:** 100% Semillon

**Brix at Harvest:** 25.2 brix,

**TA:** 5.4 g/l

**Blend Ph:** 3.37

**Suggested retail:** \$26

**Harvest dates:** 10/18/17

**Alc:** 14.8%

**Vineyard Sources:** The grapes come from the Frostwatch Vineyard in the Bennett Valley Appellation, which is distinguished by its very long growing seasons, modest yields relative to other areas and full-flavored wines with good natural acidity. The precise clone of Semillon is a mystery, since the cuttings came from plants that were supposed to be Clone 4 Chardonnay from the Bien Nacido Vineyard! We loved the fruit so we have taken advantage of this happy accident and planted additional acreage of this unique clone.

**Winemaking:** The grapes were night harvested and whole cluster pressed. The Semillon juice was then 100% barrel fermented utilizing indigenous yeasts. As a result, the primary fermentation took almost seven weeks. The benefits of a slower indigenous fermentation are many. First, a slower fermentation means a cooler fermentation, which helps retain delicate aromatics and flavor compounds. Second, indigenous fermentations are often multi-stage fermentations accomplished by several different yeasts. This lends complexity to the resulting wine. After the primary Semillon fermentation was finished on December 2nd, the wine was then sulfured to prevent a secondary malolactic fermentation. This was done to keep a crisp acid profile that balances the typical weight of the Semillon varietal characteristics. Semillons that undergo malolactic fermentation can tend to be ponderous and palate fatiguing after a few sips. The wine was subsequently topped, stirred and topped monthly until March of 2018. The wine was then lightly fined for clarity and was bottled unfiltered on May 14<sup>th</sup>, 2018, after seven months in French Oak.

**Tasting Notes:** This is our third 100% Semillon bottling. Given that we are usually very enamored by the synergy of Sauvignon Blanc and Semillon in our Kismet SB/Semillon blend, we continue to be surprised that the 100% Semillon shows so well in our blend trials. Sometimes Semillon can be somewhat ponderous, but the 2017 Frostwatch Semillon has the right amount of vivacity and overall brightness to balance the weight and viscosity that the Semillon varietal possesses. We attribute that complexity to the mystery Semillon clone we received in 1997, as well as the unique climatology of the Frostwatch Vineyard. The long hang time (the Semillon is pretty much always the last grape picked each year) allows the variety to retain some real balance that the variety can lose in warmer climes. Our Semillon shows a nice balance with notes of stone fruit and figs, as well as a hint of watermelon. As with the Kismet, the wine will pair well with seafood and poultry. Furthermore, the wine will compliment pastas with cream-based or butter-based sauces. We think this Semillon is also a good wine simply to sip on its own on your deck or patio or as an aperitif prior to a meal.

**Winemaker:** Brett Raven

**Ratings:** 2017—94 pts, Gold Medal 2020 Press Democrat North Coast Wine Challenge, 91 pts The Wine Enthusiast, Gold Medal 2019 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition. 2016—Best of Class 2018 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition, Gold Medal 2018 American Fine Wine Competition, 90 pts Wine Enthusiast. 2015—90 pts 7/17 Wine Enthusiast, Gold Medal 2017 San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition.