

2017 Division-Villages “La Frontière” Sauvignon Blanc Willamette Valley AVA

Redford-Wetle Vineyard (70%) Allegre Vineyard
(30%)

It's no secret that within the Willamette Valley the Eola-Amity Hills is one of the most special places in the U.S. for growing cool climate Pinot Noir grapes. It is definitely not an area very well known for growing Sauvignon Blanc, well, not yet. Myron Redford is as great a legend in Oregon's wine industry as they come. He founded Amity Vineyards back in mid-1970s as a part of a group of pioneering young wine entrepreneurs that were building the start of the Oregon wine industry. Myron, always experimenting, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, with grapes like Gamay Noir, Riesling and yes, Sauvignon Blanc. He and his partner Vikki Wetle planted a small 7.5 acre certified organic vineyard on Jory, Yamhill & Woodburn soils at their home property in the Eola-Amity Hills in 2006, which includes the Sauvignon Blanc that dominates for our “La Frontière.” The organically farmed Allegre Vineyard, our first in the Columbia Gorge, makes up the remaining portion.

We are usually some of the first to make picking decisions each year as we seek to make wines that are lighter, more finessed, vibrant, but still with intensity and complexity. Sauvignon Blanc was a bit of a conundrum for us as it is notorious for demonstrating very green tropic and grassy “cat pee” like aromatics when not completely ripe. For this reason and because we just hadn't tasted many versions made in the New World that were that compelling, we eschewed making Sauvignon Blanc in the past. Ultimately, this meant we would need to harvest at a more ripened level than is typical for us. Like in 2016, we were thrilled with the balance of acidity to ripeness of both sites of Sauvignon Blanc and are confident we have another special and uniquely Oregonian Sauvignon Blanc.

We created a pied de cuve (early native ferment) with a small amount of grapes to build a strong yeast population from the native flora for both sites. The wines were fermented “sur lie” in one puncheon (500L), five neutral white Burgundy barrels and a two stainless steel barrels. The ferments started and completed quite quickly in the puncheon and stainless barrel, while the oak barrels lingered and finished between December and January (2018). All were fermented dry, including the malolactic fermentation, which was completed this year.

Our second “La Frontière” demonstrates the clear Sauvignon Blanc characteristics, led by peach and pear notes and followed by lychee with snap peas or snow peas, enlivening the riper fruit notes. We thankfully stayed away from the dreaded “litter box” notes, as well as the Dole tropical fruit cup tendencies that seem to dominate the domestic Sauvignon Blanc scene. The palate is full and vibrant, with secondary notes of wildflower honey and orchard fruits, like quince. The wine is drinking very well out of the gate and is quite pleasurable and we're looking forward to seeing the future of this bottling.

Alc 13.6%, 200 cases produced

