

IDLEWILD

2022 Flora & Fauna White Wine, North Coast

Vineyard

Flora and Fauna loosely means the collection of plant and animal life of a certain epoch. In my version, it is the collection of varietals from the cellar that make up the blend for the year. 2022 is based in Arneis that is blended with Muscat Canelli, Favorita, Erbaluce, and Cortese to achieve the balance desired from this Piedmontese inspired blend. The fruit comes from Fox Hill Vineyard, Lost Hills Ranch, and Rancho Coda. Fox Hill lends depth, Lost Hills balances with vibrancy and bright aromatics, and Rancho Coda gives a core of fruit and mouthfeel. In the end, Mendocino is on display with high and low tones and a very pleasant rusticity while Russian River Valley fills in the gaps to make the wine cohesive.

Vintage

2022 started slow and a bit wet with Spring rains, which were a blessing to offset the drought from the previous years enough to get us safely through the growing season. The summer months were mild even. Then, a large heat spike hit for a week just as the vintage began. If we hadn't had the wet start to the season (or the work over years to increase soil organic matter and overall health), this could have been disastrous. But, the vines prevailed and did beautifully. The effect seen in the wines is either a decided delicate nature if picked early to prevent over-ripening in the heat or a brooding density if the wines hung on through the heat.

Winemaking

Winemaking starts in the vineyard, and my preference is to work with sites that require minimal to no work. In other words, the basics done right and well timed are all a great site needs. When that is the case, the winemaking becomes a simple game of guiding the fruit to be what it already is. I time picking for this blend to when the core of the wine's pieces overlay into a balance of bright acidity with emerging tones of aromatic depth. From there, the grapes were whole cluster pressed, fermented via native yeasts, left on all the lees and solids, aged in neutral oak, and underwent native secondary fermentation. Complexity and texture are gained from allowing secondary fermentation and aging on lees in neutral oak for four months, while the structure and acidity from picking plenty early allow for great vibrancy and energy through the wine.

Wine

The 2022 shows depth of flavor while retaining a very moderate weight and a lithe finish. The Flora & Fauna White is a balance of florals (orange blossoms), minerals (wet stones), citrus (lemon peel), and orchard fruit (pear). Just when the wine starts to feel intense in its phenolics and aromatics, the palate turns to this near rain water like lightness with a crisp and clean finish.

11.5% alc by vol.