

STOLPMAN VINEYARDS

BALLARD CANYON

L'AVION 2017 *Roussanne*

TECH

VINEYARD COMPONENTS

blocks 4 & 7 Roussanne,
block 3 Chardonnay

VARIETAL BLEND

93% Roussanne, 7% Chardonnay

VINIFICATION

crushed, then pressed prior to native
fermentation

FINAL ANALYSIS

alcohol: 13.5%

VATTING/FERMENTATION

Native Fermentation in 60% New / 40% Neutral
French Ermitage 500L Puncheon - allowed to
rise to room temperature

COOPERAGES & ELEVAGE

Aged 20 months in 500L Ermitage Vache Forest
Puncheon, 60% New

RELEASE DATE

October 2019

HARVEST DATE

October 28-30, 2017 (roussanne)
October 4, 2017 (chardonnay)

TOTAL PRODUCTION

480 cases

BACKGROUND

We feel we have a singular opportunity to make opulent, intriguing Roussanne. Our southern location near 34 degrees latitude gives the Roussanne grapes intense solar radiation to tan the fruit their namesake "Rousse" or Rust color. Limestone soils and pacific-influenced cold nights combine to maintain acidity late in the year. Low humidity and high winds keep the grapes clear of mold and for better or worse, we never get significant rainfall through harvest. We can "wait out" the late-ripening grape until it is perfectly golden and concentrated.

La Cuadrilla takes every possible effort in the vineyard to optimize the potential of our Roussanne fruit. In the late summer we pull every leaf away from the fruit to allow for full sun penetration. Then, about a month prior to harvest, when the sun-exposed side of each cluster tans, but the inside remains green, every grape cluster is gently hand-rotated 180 degrees to facilitate an even sun-tan. We could not make L'Avion without the focus and determination of our full time crew, La Cuadrilla.

Wine destined for L'Avion must go through three cuts. First, only the two older blocks of Roussanne are eligible for L'Avion. Then, only the prettiest, evenly "Rousse" - or sun tanned - clusters are selected by Cuadrilla. At last, we include only our favorite barrels for L'Avion. At the end of the day, L'Avion accounts for 25-33% of our total Roussanne production each year.

In the late 1930s, teenage cattle rancher Anchor Johnson and his buddies landed their rickety plane down the straight chute where Roussanne is now planted. The young men would park the plane under the oak tree at the end of the dirt strip. Roussanne rows now run lengthwise along the old runway, creating the inspiration for the lanes on the L'Avion label.

VINTAGE

The healthy winter rains of 2017 re-energized the Roussanne vines to push on through their typically slow ripening. As always, Roussanne yields remained low despite the rain, even below the average Syrah yields. With more energy and the same amount of fruit, L'Avion was guaranteed to reward fans with intensified concentration and richness.

SENSORY

The texture - the mouthfeel - of the 2017 L'Avion might impress me even more than the wine's explosively concentrated flavor profile, at least upon release, in the wine's infancy. This golden elixir coats with the soft suppleness of a lush red wine - a depth that already enveloped the new French oak - and then it goes further with a billowy, feathered suppleness. All of this decadence is lifted with a citrus glaze and lemon verbena above the usual, telltale L'Avion character: Honeysuckle, Golden Pineapple, and this year even LL Cool J Peaches & Cream.