

STOLPMAN VINEYARDS

BALLARD CANYON

L'AVION 2015 *Roussanne*

TECH

VINEYARD COMPONENTS

blocks 4 & 7 Roussanne,
block 3 Chardonnay

VARIETAL BLEND

90% Roussanne, 10% Chardonnay

VINIFICATION

destemmed & crushed prior to fermentation

FINAL ANALYSIS

alcohol: 13.9%

VATTING/FERMENTATION

Native fermentation in 500L Ermitage Vache
Forest Puncheon, 75% New

COOPERAGES & ELEVAGE

Aged 18 months in 500L Ermitage Vache Forest
Puncheon, 75% New

RELEASE DATE

April 2018

HARVEST DATE

September 28-30, 2015

TOTAL PRODUCTION

500 cases

2434 ALAMO PINTADO AVE - PO BOX 488
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NOTES

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 the namesake "Rousse" or Rust color. Limestone soils and 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 rain fall through harvest.

La Cuadrilla takes every possible effort in the vineyard to optimize the Roussanne fruit. Most notably, in the late summer we pull every leaf away from the fruit to allow full sun penetration and then about a month prior to harvest, every grape cluster is rotated 180 degrees to facilitate an even sun-tan.

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.

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.

VINTAGE

High winds during flowering reduced yields across all varieties in 2015. With less fruit per vine and the warm weather that followed in summer, 2015 was by far the earliest harvest in the history of Stolpman Vineyards. For the late ripening Roussanne grape, the conditions created unprecedented flavor intensity. When I tasted the wine in barrel and just after bottling, I feared the wine might be too powerful to be enjoyed young. However, after almost a year of bottle age the flavors have smoothed into a masterpiece.

AT THE WINERY

The flavor intensity of the 2015 Roussanne created a firm tactile structure noticeable in tasting the juice. Because we picked a month earlier than usual, the fruit came in with slightly higher acidity than usual. With a more significant acidic backbone, we didn't need to frame the wine with 100% new French Oak Puncheons. For the first time since we began making L'Avion in 2002, we used 25% neutral French Oak Puncheon, only 75% new. In terms of normally sized barrels typical in California, this translates to about 33% new French oak exposure.

10% estate Chardonnay gives the wine a further boost of firm texture on the finish to pop up our Roussanne's viscosity.

SENSORY

With a year in bottle, 2015 L'Avion is certainly one of the best vintages to date. The wine's supple luxuriousness certainly competes with the 2005, 2008, and 2014 - my other favorite years. Beautiful golden pineapple soars out of the glass and coats the palate complemented by white flower perfume, Jasmine tea, and tangerine peel. The wine shows heightened refinement - perhaps due to a slight decrease in new French oak relative to previous vintages - the mouthfeel seems polished and seamless and the finish shows finely sanded, softly round tannin.