

Martha Stoumen 'Out of the Meadow' 2019

Producer: Martha Stoumen

Provenance: Siusun Valley

Farming: Low-spray conventional - no herbicides or pesticides but fungicides are used

Grape(s): 35% Chenin blanc, 22% Vermentino, 20% Trousseau gris, 13% Green Hungarian, 10% Chasselas

Vineyard(s): King Vineyard - 30 year old coplanted vineyard with clay soils and a high water table

Vintage: "Really beautiful year in terms of weather" Martha tells us. Slow and steady, with a little ripening delay but not so much that harvest was compressed.

Fermentation/ Aging: Foot crushed and pressed into barrel for fermentation and aging on gross lees.

Fining/ Filtration: none.

Sulfite: 30 ppm

Misc: The 2019 'Out of the Meadow' has a larger proportion of Chasselas because it all got eaten by birds in 2018!



The Producer:

Martha comes to wine from a broader passion for agriculture and the Italian language. Her path led her to a farm in Tuscany where the singular nature of the grape vine took hold. From there she headed to Sicily where she apprenticed under the great Giusto Occhipinti whose humanistic approach to clean viticulture forms the basis from which Martha evolves her own approach: "you're a human being, you know when fruit is ripe!"

Up until 2017 Martha was doing literally 100% of the work herself, producing 2,500 cases a year. With 2018's harvest she doubled her production, working in the shared space at Pax and has hired Tim Lyons as her assistant winemaker. She sources grapes from parcels she leases and farms herself as well as vineyards with multigenerational farmers working cleanly.

The Vineyard

'Out of the Meadow' is a true field blend sourced from King Vineyard in the Siusun Valley. Martha's discovery of King Vineyard was a matter of happenstance or fate. On a trip to pick up some used tanks, she happened to ask if there was anyone growing anything interesting nearby. Next thing, she was calling Roger King from his driveway.

The soils are very clay rich with a high water table so although synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers are not used, there is a need to spray against fungus making this the only vineyard she works herself that doesn't qualify as organic. In Martha's estimation this regimen is the most appropriate for the site despite her desire to do without fungicide. The farming here is a curious mix: conventional fungicides and biodynamic preparations are rarely seen in conjunction with each other.

The grapes for 'Out of the Meadow' are all harvested in a single day and cofermented so Martha and Roger work extensively to manage the ripening window to get the greatest overlap of different varieties. The eccentric blend of Chenin, Vermintino, Trousseau Gris, Green Hungarian and Chasselas is a direct reflection of the year with percentages shifting depending on the crop itself rather than by human design. In 2019 they started using netting on the Trousseau Gris and Chasselas to protect them from birds.

The Cellar

The sorted fruit is foot crushed and left to macerate for an hour or so before pressing through a pneumatic bladder press right into barrel for ferment. Aged on gross lees through the winter until March when the wine is racked and bottled.

Stoumen's barrel program was influenced by her time working at Broc: she looks for wineries that take the best care of their wood. Mostly sourcing from wineries she's worked with like Chalk Hill whose Chardonnay barrels she's fond of.

Every month she'll taste and top up each barrel. If a particular barrel feels a little funky she may decide to add somewhere between 15-30 ppm sulfur. The only other sulfur addition will be made just before bottling. The decision is mostly based on taste and smell although she does factor pH into the decision. To date, Martha has never fined or filtered any of her wines but she isn't dogmatically opposed, just has ever felt the need.

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