



FROG'S LEAP

2020 SAUVIGNON BLANC
CONCRETE AGED
RUTHERFORD NAPA VALLEY



A BRIEF HISTORY

The genesis for our Concrete Aged Sauvignon Blanc combines two threads of history, both starting in 1981. That spring, Ray and Louise Rossi planted a brand-new stand of Sauvignon Blanc at their family's ranch, looking to capitalize on the newfound popularity of the variety. That same spring, my mom and dad founded Frog's Leap with their friend Larry, choosing for their first wine Sauvignon Blanc, a variety that my dad had fallen in love with by tasting the great Loire wines of Sancerre and Pouilly-Fumé. About 15 seasons later, Frog's Leap was introduced to the Rossi family by our vineyard guru, Frank Leeds, and we began to help farm and purchase the fruit from the 1981 block of Sauvignon Blanc, which we simply called "Cane," in reference to its pruning style.

By 2015, that block of SB had come to be known as "Old Cane", and it provided the fruit for the first wine that Frog's Leap ever fermented and aged entirely in concrete. We worked with a local specialty concrete manufacturer, Sonoma Cast Stone, to produce a 500-gallon concrete "egg" (it gets that name because it looks like an egg, natch) so that we could ferment the block on its own, as an experiment. We knew that concrete had been used for centuries in combination with SB, and we thought the egg looked kind of cool and funky, so why not have some fun?

That experiment has become launchpad for a new way of approaching our Sauvignon Blanc. What started with one egg for Old Cane has become nine eggs, allowing us to explore the subtle variations in soil, terrain, clonal selection, and vine age across our 44 acres of estate-grown, certified organic, dry-farmed Sauvignon Blanc vines. The fruit for each egg is selected from an area out in the field that we have identified as exceptional that season, and the final wine brings together the best of these hand-selected lots every year. Concrete has the effect of locking in the freshness of a wine, while still allowing it to mature and deepen in complexity; the cheery, lemon-grapefruit aromatic profile of youthful SB transforms into a lightning bolt of lemon curd, orange blossom, and flinty smokiness. The extended time on the lees adds tremendous umami—or depth and richness—born directly from concrete's tendency to keep lees in suspension for months on end. The end result is a mineral-driven, complex Sauvignon Blanc that captures the full potential of a plot of soil—the same qualities that attracted my father to the grape over 40 years ago. RW



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ABOUT THE WINE

Despite the worldwide craziness going on around us, 2020 brought us a beautiful and temperate growing season, and the Sauvignon Blanc was in prime position entering harvest. Selections included Old Cane, which stood out with its characteristic tropical notes, and the old block at Leeds, which was beautifully balanced with its usual scraggly bunches. Both lots were given 3 hours of skin contact and fermented with native yeast. Fermentation took place, slow and steady, over the course of a month. Minimally stabilized with sulfur, this wine was bottled unfinned and unfiltered after 11 months on lees, then aged a further year in bottle before release.

THE BLEND

40% Old Cane block, Rossi Vineyard, Rutherford

Planted 1981 in gravelly loam, Emmolo clone on St. George

60% Old Long Rows block, Chavez-Leeds Vineyard, Rutherford

Planted 1984 in Adobe clay, old-vine Mondavi TK clone on St. George

STATISTICS

harvested: August 18 - August 20

harvest chemistry: 21.7° brix 5.6 g/L total acidity, 3.46 pH

final chemistry: 13.4% alcohol, 5.3 g/L total acidity, 3.46 pH,

0.03% residual sugar

bottled July 29 2021

489 cases produced, from one concrete egg and three concrete cubes

WINEMAKERS

John Williams

Rory Williams

Pablo Polanco

VINEYARDIST

Frank Leeds