

Infinite Possibilities

LLOYD CELLARS' INAUGURAL SAUVIGNON BLANC EMBODIES THE ESSENCE OF THE GRAPE AND THE CARNEROS APPELLATION

by Randy Caparoso

AT STANLY RANCH, a vineyard and luxury resort situated on a property spanning more than 700 acres in the southeast corner of Napa Valley's Carneros AVA, a gigantic steel sculpture shaped like an infinity symbol floats over a low hilltop of grapevines like a spaceship determined to make crop circles. As with any artwork, its meaning is in the eye of the beholder.

There was no doubt, however, what its surroundings meant to Rob and Bonnie Lloyd—owners of nationally distributed wine brand Lloyd Cellars—who recently hosted a dinner for close family and friends just feet away from “Infinity Hill” at The Grange, Stanly Ranch’s outdoor restaurant set in the middle of a chef’s garden. The occasion was the debut of the couple’s Lloyd Cellars 2024 Carneros Sauvignon Blanc (\$30), an impeccably crisp, pure (no oak!), steely, and dry iteration of the variety that hinted at the brininess scenting the chilly breezes blowing in from the nearby East Bay (summer nights in Carneros call for thick sweaters). Everything about the wine spoke to the universal appeal and the almost-infinite food-pairing possibilities of the grape: mouthwatering acidity, grapefruit, lemon, minerality, and, above all, an incredible lightness of touch.

Rob’s remarks at the table were as honest as the wine: “After making wine for 16 years,” he said in reference to his peerless track record as winemaker for La Crema, Rombauer, and a number of small handcrafted brands, “I was offered the fruit from a new planting by the Sangiacomo family. I could not turn down the opportunity to make a wine that, in a way, is the exact opposite of what you expect in a California Chardonnay.” In short, this was a chance for him to stretch his winemaking muscles and channel his talents in a new direction—one he was excited to take.



PHOTOS COURTESY OF LLOYD CELLARS

Bonnie and Rob Lloyd are the owners of Lloyd Cellars.

The Sauvignon Blanc was picked early enough to maximize natural acidity and finished half in stainless steel and half in concrete egg, ultimately yielding notes of “fresh peach, citrus blossom, and gooseberry,” in Rob’s words. Appropriately, just before we sat down for the first course, The Grange’s gardener gave me and my fellow guests a taste of fresh gooseberry cultivated in two large boxes—aromatic and palate-slaking (yes, just like Sauvignon Blanc) in a way we don’t get to experience every day.

The first course included just some of the virtually endless



Lloyd Cellars' 2024 Carneros Sauvignon Blanc is brand-new to its portfolio.

foods ideal for pure, tart Sauvignon Blanc: kampachi crudo with fresh-picked stone fruit and Fresno chili; peak-summer heirloom tomatoes with basil blossoms from the nearby Tenbrink Family Vineyards in Suisun Valley; fresh lettuce in a vinaigrette made with lavender, tarragon, and pickled green strawberry, all plucked from the garden just inches from our table; and sourdough focaccia dipped in 25-year-old balsamic. While the meal progressed delightfully from there, I kept going back in my mind to that wine and its indeed infinite pleasures. **\$**