



2016 THE PRINCE IN HIS CAVES

FARINA VINEYARD

This wine is composed of 100% Sauvignon Blanc from the base of the superb Farina Vineyard on Sonoma Mountain. The vineyard is exclusively east-facing and descends from about 1100 feet of altitude to 800 feet. The fruit for the Prince usually comes only from the very bottom of the vineyard. The soil is much loamier there than at the top of the vineyard, but there is a huge rock sheet only

feet beneath the soil, and so, in spite of the rich, loamy soil, the roots of the vines cannot gain much purchase. The vines are somewhat more vigorous here than at the top of the vineyard, but only somewhat. They still struggle, even if in a different way than their peers at the top. The fruit ripens very slowly here and without danger of roasting or sun burn. The combination of eastern aspect and long-lasting morning fog guarantees freshness, soft skins, and high acidity in spite of the long hang time.

We began making this wine pretty much by accident in 2006. We harvested the fruit from this section of the vineyard about two weeks later than the fruit from the top, and when it reached the winery, we were very disappointed. The berries were large and plump, and I feared that they might be watery. To overcome this, I crushed and destemmed the fruit, and then began to draw juice away to concentrate the ratio between the skins and the remaining juice. And then I realized that I had not intended to make a wine with skins at all— only juice. So all that I was doing was throwing away the very material that I wanted to make wine from. I then realized that I had inadvertently committed myself to making a skin-fermented Sauvignon Blanc, similar to the famous wines of Radikon and Gravner that I had been studying— but not intending to emulate.

The 2016 was made in a way that is very classical for us. We bring the fruit to the winery, and introduce it gradually and without destemming into 600 liter puncheons turned vertical, with their heads removed. We stomp some of the fruit as it goes in, releasing some of the juice. Then we leave it alone. In a week or so, fermentation starts and a cap forms. Still we leave it alone. We call this the Courier Protocol— an extended floating cap fermentation with a minimum of punchdowns and no pump-overs. After about 3 weeks of fermentation, we drain the wine away, press the remaining pomace very gently, and age the wine (press and free-run) separately for about a year, in 220 liter neutral oak barrels. The wine usually ages without SO₂ and is bottled with 0 free and about 40 mg/L total.

A note on the origin of the name: it is long story; the condensed version is that the wine is named for an Italian prince who made wine on his family's ancient estate for his whole life, but decided, when he was about 70, to stop selling it. When he died 18 years later, he had 18 vintages in the cellar, waiting to be sold. We think that his white wines had skin contact, but he worked very secretively and no one knows for sure what methods he used. The wine is named for his singular and unconventional devotion to his craft.

TOTAL PRODUCTION:
about 328 cases