

# FIDDLEHEAD CELLARS

## Santa Ynez Valley 2002 L'ORVERT Sauvignon Blanc



### THE PLACE AND THE WINE

Happy Canyon in the Santa Ynez Valley - blessed with warm days and cool evenings...truly ideal for ripening Sauvignon Blanc with great natural acidity. When you marry perfect terroir with serious farming and lots of hand-attention in the vineyard, the result is great grapes destined for a long-lived wine.

In 2002, our fruit from the upper bench in Westerly Vineyard was harvested on Sept. 7<sup>th</sup>. Hand-sorted in the vineyard and whole cluster pressed in the winery, aged in tight-grain French oak nearly a year and then held in our winery cellar for bottle aging.

Lots of minerality, hints of lemon grass, and key lime; elegantly muscular; it teases the palate with its youthful expression.

**A serious (Bordeaux-styled) SB where you do not have to be serious to love it!**



And I can't help but remind you that it is the wine in Sideways that Miles and Maya adored and described in detail, and was *the one* that kicked off their infamous wine dinner.

Check out our website for this famous clip!

### KATHY'S CORNER

It's really HUNNYSUCKLE...so why is it called L'ORVERT?

In line with my love of Sauvignon Blanc from around the world, I was (and continue to be) committed to making seriously styled SB. From a practical perspective, I make the wine backwards. I decide how I want the wine to turn out and then figure out through experience, history, gut sensibility and experimentation the best way to get there. In the case of this wine, I wanted a wine modeled after the great Haut Brion Blanc...rich and luscious, but with subtle spice, subtle nuances and ageability.

It's meant to be a wine that truly improves with bottle age. I found that the fruit driven grapes of Happy Canyon, and specifically the then Westerly (now McGinley) Vineyard, gave me a wine with great texture when fermented in new French oak barrels. But not just any barrel... I found the Cooper DAMY to have a "house style" that wove a full yet supple texture into and throughout the wine instead of imposing the typical toastiness onto the wine. The oak tannins are always slightly angular in the young wine and silky and delicious after bottle aging. So I developed the style of "honeysuckle", whereby I age the wine in the barrel and then quite a while in the bottle before it is released to the market.

So take off those blinders and do not evaluate this wine based on vintage; DO NOT taste it thinking "young, fruity and crisp Sauvignon Blanc" and DO NOT serve it too cold. Rather taste this wine for its texture and savory qualities, like the chefs who all seems to prefer this style because they are trained to appreciate the texture. Appreciate this wine for its depth, spice, and mouth filling character.

I loved that the term "Honeysuckle" described the experience of this wine...and it was a nice fit with my other two styles, HAPPY CANYON and GOOSEBURY. But the federal label regulating agency (the BATF at the time - now TTB) disallowed my use of this label "since the consumer would be confused into thinking there is added honeysuckle fragrance." So the 2001 label "HONEYUCKLE" became a collector's item, and I went back to the wine naming game.

Fortunately, I ran into Darrell Corti, the well-respected wine guru from Sacramento, who fell in love with the European nature of this wine. It was Darrell who concocted the name L'ORVERT. "OR" meaning gold in French, to represent the golden contribution of the barrel to the wine's color (not to mention flavor) and with "VERT" or green in French representing the color of Sauvignon Blanc grape juice. So L'ORVERT is the marriage of the golden with the green. But over time, I learned that most of my customers were not French linguists and often misspelled and mispronounce the name. **So this label, too, is now a collector's item.**

With the 2003 vintage, I learned to play the BATF game and tried tweaking the spelling of HONEYUCKLE to HUNNYSUCKLE (that Winnie-the-Pooh nonsense spelling). To my glee they decided there was not confusion with this word. So L'ORVERT, HONEYUCKLE and HUNNYSUCKLE are all the same wonderful wine style which forever hereafter will be our HUNNY!