

## La Clarine 'Al Basc' 2019

**Producer** - Hank Beckmeyer and Caroline Hoël

**Provenance:** Sierra Foothills, California

**Farming:** Organic

**Grape(s):** 100% Albarino

**Vineyard(s):** Rorick Heritage Vineyard (Forlorn Hope) is a limestone rich, natural amphitheater in Calaveras County.



**Vintage:** Hank writes: “Beautiful, easy, lovely harvest. Everything went right. It was a remarkably unremarkable vintage that seems to have made really remarkable wines.”

**Fermentation/ Aging:** whole cluster, foot crushed in open top macro bins for 10 days spontaneous fermentation. After ferment the must including stems, skins, seeds and all is transferred to various sizes of polyethylene flex tank for 7 months maceration. The wine is never pressed, the juice is racked away from the solids and bottled.

**Fining/ Filtration:** none.

**Sulfite:** after a few years with occasional mouse issues, they now add a small amount of sulfite at crush. None added at bottling.

**Misc:** the idea for Al Basc came about from a conversation with the great Eric Texier about the nature of 6-7 month macerations. Hank decided Albarino would be a great grape to try it out with and three years later here we are!

The name comes from: Alba(rino) Skin Contact > **Al Basc**

### **The Producer:**

If wine writer Terry Theise’s notion that distinctiveness as precondition for greatness is correct, La Clarine Farm is certainly primed for immortality. The La Clarine wines are teeming with life in a way that separates them from even the most lively of French natural producers. Self-proclaimed refugees from the music business, Hank Beckmeyer and Caroline Hoël began the project thinking they’d try a few things and if people liked it, they’d continue. Recovering biodynamic farmers, they have evolved from Steiner’s method of rigorous input to Fukuoka’s method of careful observation. Although they purchase the majority of their fruit, Hank writes about the quantum entanglement of vineyard, winery and winemaker; a cellar-inclusive addendum to the conception of terroir. The La Clarine wines are bottled inquiries, cloudy with curiosity and a bursting state of vivacious play that makes them a joy to drink and endlessly fascinating.

### **The Vineyard:**

The Albarino for ‘Al Basc’ is grown at Rorick Heritage Vineyard, a recent acquisition of Forlorn Hope. It is an encyclopedic vineyard in the form of a steep amphitheater full to

brim with a grab bag of quirky grapes. 20 varieties were planted by the first owner Barden Stevenot, many in the early 2000's, with another 10 now in production under Matthew's stewardship to be followed by 10-15 additional varieties currently in the nurseries.

The particular combination of limestone and schist as well as a treasure trove of fascinating grapes has made RHV a household name among the artisan winemakers of California. Folks like Evan Lewandowski, Michael Cruse and Chad Hinds (Method Sauvage) have all found themselves drawn in by the promise of Trousseau, Picpoul, Tempranillo and even ungrafted Chardonnay!

Of the vineyard Hank writes: “ the voice of the vineyard speaks loudly. All the wines I've made from there (Albariño, Tempranillo and Chardonnay) display a unique set of flavors and textures, quite unlike any other vineyard I've worked with in the Foothills.”

### **The Winery:**

The fruit for both the skin-fermented 'Al Basc' and the pressed basic Albarino are hand picked the same day. The grapes destined for 'Al Basc' are piled into open top polyethylene harvest bins and foot crushed. After ten days of spontaneous fermentation the entire must including stems, seeds and stems are transferred to flex tanks of varying sizes for seven months of maceration. The base wines are never pressed; the juice is racked away from the solids shortly before bottling. No fining or filtration, 60 cases produced.

After a few experiences with wines developing mousey off-flavor, Hank has shifted his sulfite application up to 20 ppm during crush to discourage the overeager lactic acid bacteria populations that are substantially more sensitive to sulfite than yeast. No sulfite added at bottling.

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