

at Pax and has hired Tim Lyons as her assistant and fellow Broc alum Lorren Butterwick to help her with sales and marketing.

The Vineyard

The majority of 'Honeymoon White' is composed of Colombard from 70 year old vines at Ricetti Vineyard in Redwood Valley in the Northern reaches of Ukiah where it is typically cooler. The vineyard was originally planted in 1948 in mostly sandy loam soil. Today, the vines thrive alongside apiaries and chickens under the care of the Ricetti matriarch whom Martha calls 'the queen of compost.' The soils here are well aerated and extremely lively, owing in part to their calcium rich compost.

The area gets fog almost every morning that burns off with the afternoon sun creating the ideal conditions for botrytis development aided by the head trained vines which allow for ample aeration of the bunches. Picked in late October, the phenolics are much more developed than the September Colombard pick that goes into Post Flirtation White and is heavily affected by the noble rot.

The remainder of the wine is 25% Chardonnay from Hawkeye Vineyard also in Redwood Valley. Farmed by 4th generation grower Pete Johnson who helps Martha with Benson Ranch, the vineyard is mostly old vines of Carginane but there's some 30-35 year old Chardonnay vines at the edge of the property. Because Johnson's neighbor doesn't farm organically this side of the property isn't certified organic even though his farming certainly is. The white rows Martha uses for this wine come from more towards the interior where she can be fairly certain there's no residue from the neighbor's spraying. The vines here are massive with dense canopies resulting in slow maturation aided by the cooler climate in Redwood Valley. While the Colombard is picked at an advanced level of ripeness, the Chardonnay is one of the earlier harvests.

The Chenin Blanc comes from King Vineyard in the Siusun Valley. Martha's discovery of King Vineyard was a matter of happenstance or fate. On a trip to pick up some used tanks, she happened to ask if there was anyone growing anything interesting nearby. Next thing, she was calling Roger King from his driveway.

The soils are very clay rich with a high water table so although synthetic pesticides, herbicides and fertilizers are not used, there is a need to spray against fungus making this the only vineyard she works herself that doesn't qualify as organic. In Martha's estimation this regimen is the most appropriate for the site despite her desire to do without fungicide. The farming here is a curious mix: conventional fungicides and biodynamic preparations are rarely seen in conjunction with each other.

The Cellar

The three varietals in Honeymoon 2020 were fermented separately, each in neutral French oak barrels. At crush, both the Chenin blanc and Colombard grapes were pressed immediately, settled and then racked off heavy lees, and barrel fermented. Prior to pressing the Chardonnay was foot-trodden before pressing, settling and racking to barrel. The base wines were aged for 11 months on lees before blending and bottling without fining or filtration.

Stoumen's barrel program was influenced by her time working at Broc: she looks for wineries that take the best care of their wood. Mostly sourcing from wineries she's worked with like Chalk Hill whose Chardonnay barrels she's fond of. Every month she'll taste and top up each barrel. If a particular barrel feels a little funky she may decide to add somewhere between 15-30 ppm sulfur. The only other sulfur addition will be made just before bottling. The decision is mostly based on taste and smell although she does factor pH into the decision.

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