



2005 WILLAMETTE VALLEY TF

BACKGROUND We fell in love with the Tocai grape in 1996 when we were looking at winemaking facilities in Friuli. It is the most pervasive variety in all of Friuli. Though the name implies it might have a commonality with the dessert wine of Hungary or a range of things called “Tokaj”, it is actually a member of the Sauvignon family. It’s vigorous, with huge canes and huge clusters and, with a climate cooler than Friuli, we have it planted on one of our warmest sites to ensure that ripening is not a problem. The only problem is that the name “Tocai Friulano” violates Oregon’s labeling regulations that prohibit the use of European place names in grape variety names. Finding no viable alternative, we went the abbreviation route, and call this wine “TF”.

GROWING SEASON Summer-like weather appeared in late January in the northern Willamette Valley, pushing activities in the vineyard over two months ahead of schedule, with bud break occurring quite early, on March 15th. Then, in late March, one of the driest winters on record turned in to one of the wettest springs. Cloudy, rainy and cool weather at bloom time, June 8-12, were the cause of reduced crop levels (approx. 75% of normal) for the vintage. These rains, however, saturated the soil and kept vines from any sign of water stress until late August. Cool temperatures throughout September and October and rains beginning at the very end of September, meant slow-ripening fruit and challenging decisions about when to pick. With good vineyard management to control the effects of the rain, we were able to avoid rot or mildew issues, allowing fruit to hang in wait of optimal fruit ripeness and flavor profiles. Cooler temperatures translated into structured acidity and ideal flavor development in the wines.

VINEYARDS The Tocai Friulano for this wine comes from plantings at our estate Ellis Vineyard, a site that is owned by our friends, Del and Jessie Ellis, but is leased to us. This vineyard is part of the Adelsheim Vineyard estate, and we take care of all of the vineyard management and decision-making. It is at the eastern end of the Chehalem Mountains, around 550 feet above sea level on reddish, volcanic-origin Saum soils. These soils provide adequate drainage in winter and spring, but still retain enough moisture into the late summer to keep the vines from shutting down due to drought stress. The Tocai buds were grafted onto 3¼ acres of Chardonnay plants, originally planted in 1988.

WINEMAKING The incredible fruitiness of Tocai grapes is carried in a layer attached under the skin. Because this flavor is lost with traditional whole cluster pressing, we begin pressing the whole clusters, but rather than pumping the juice to a tank, pump the juice back over the somewhat pressed grapes. The natural enzymes in the pressed juice help break down that flavor layer – two hours of skin contact has proven to be prime. After pressing, the wine was made in the same way as our other stainless-steel fermented whites, inoculating the juice with a commercial yeast to insure a slow, cool fermentation and allowing partial malolactic fermentation to smooth out the mouth-feel. This TF was bottled in April of 2006.

THE WINE As compared to its Old World counterparts, the nose of our Tocai is in the direction of fennel and Herbs de Provence, and less about new-mown hay. In the mouth, ours shows firmness and minerality, and is well balanced with richness, acidity and a long, bold finish; Friulian Tocais tend to be earthy and slightly bitter. In Friuli, we were served Tocai with “Dateri”, a kind of mussel. Here, shellfish of any kind, herb-crusted white fish, or herbed roasted chicken would partner perfectly with our Tocai.

THE LABEL This wine is a part of our line of intriguing white (and pink) wines—all are of small production, some (like this Tocai Friulano) are of unique varieties. The label features a drawing, by Ginny Adelsheim, of our winery as seen from our Calkins Lane Vineyard.

PRODUCTION We produced 198 cases of 2005 Willamette Valley TF.

