

SANDBOX.
KEEP PLAYING CALIFORNIA.

Edaphology / *noun*

from Greek ἔδαφος, edaphos, "ground",-λογία, -logia

The study of the relationship between soil, and land cultivation practices, with plants

Edaphos is a small label that is a side project of Ernest Vineyards, owned and operated by Erin Brooks and Todd Gottula. Ernest has become a fabulous go-to winery in the trend of site specific Pinot Noirs that are far more transparent to terroir than ripe and saturated. Edaphos is the project Erin and Todd like to call their lab, or their 'Sandbox' where they get to experiment and play around with different grape varieties. Insert rollicking applause here! Anytime great quality producers like this decide that creating an entire second label based on trying their hands at the more unique Seven Percent grapes, it is truly music to our ears.

Edaphos helps jumpstart the chances of classic California wine lovers to take notice. For Pinot hounds to sniff out the potential of Grenache. For Chardonnay die hards to wake up and smell the Aligote. And, well, for those that might know the boundless beauty of Petite Arvine like we do, may they share in our elation to see it actually grown and produced right here in our backyard.

- Kevin Wardell, September 2020

Edaphos Petite Arvine

WINE NO.1

Edaphos

Petite Arvine

Alder Springs Vineyard, Mendocino, California 2019

RE-ORDER: \$38

GRAPE: PETITE ARVINE

The Arvine grape is best known from its incredibly high alpine roots in both Valais, Switzerland, and just south in the Valle D'Aosta region of Italy. Clearly specialized vines are most suited for these unique climates and their corresponding stresses; colder temps, shorter growing seasons, porous rocky soils. Alpine whites like this (and perhaps only Chasselas) have really come to define the great potential of their respective regions. Here in California, we have very few grape vines planted in any such terrain, but the Alder Springs and its close proximity to the Pacific Ocean in Northern Mendocino appears to feel just enough like home to do the variety some justice.

GLASS: If one were to literally break open this bottle and inhale the aromatics instantly diffused from the wine that spilled out, the reaction would be "who the heck just broke the bottle of Petite Arvine?!" This slightly odd illustration points to a few things:

1. How much we love Petite Arvine and can identify it quickly
2. How delightfully aromatically on point this bottle is with varietal correctness
3. That not all wine tastings go gracefully. This totally, actually happened.

Thankfully, we had reserves. Warm jasmine and honeysuckle, tart yellow plum and under-ripe apricot, teaming with fresh spring herbs. It's never assumed that the minerality will shine through, compared with its sister Alpine wines, but the warm river stone texture on this Petite Arvine compliments the overall mouthfeel beautifully.

Edaphos Aligoté

WINE NO.2

Edaphos

Aligoté

Bennett Valley, Sonoma, California 2017

RE-ORDER: \$30

GRAPE: ALIGOTÉ

Be honest, when is the last time you've Aligoté'd? It never ceases to amaze that a native grape to Burgundy, the only other white grape allowed in the region, one that is a direct progeny of Pinot (and Chardonnay and Gamay) simply has become all but forgotten amongst its peers. Ignoring the odd theory that the name Aligoté may have ludicrously ill fated linguistic roots as *Harigoter*, meaning 'to cut in pieces', where else does one look for an explanation of such a falling out? As Burgundy wines have gone truly ballistic in the past 40 years, it is simply a fascinating side story that the number of Aligoté plantings have remained almost exactly the same. Devotees maintain that it is a grape that simply requires the perfect site. Could California have one or two of those perhaps?

GLASS: Where Chardonnay and Aligoté might really differ, it is in the edges. Aligoté is simply not afraid to push hard on the side of acidity, and dabble in a bit of bitterness in order to find a balance with it's ample ripeness and structure. Valencia orange peel, green mango salad and celery salt on fresh cucumber come to mind here. And yes, those are quite distinct notes for such a distinct wine. The best part is that this is so very on-brand for the grape variety. The mouthfeel is layered and integrates further with a little air. This wine provides a textural roller coaster that creates some deserved space for getting to know this all but forgotten edgy princess.

Ediphos Grenache

WINE NO.3

Ediphos

Grenache

Steel Plow Vineyard, Sonoma, California 2017

RE-ORDER: \$38

GRAPE: GRENACHE

Grenache seems the heir apparent for popularity in the California landscape for growers and producers alike. It has more than proven itself to grow well here with prolific yields and delicious results. Yet, even though it is one of the most planted grapes in the world, it still falls far short in numbers to the likes of Pinot Noir or its familiar partner in crime from the Southern Rhone, Syrah. Speaking of Rhone wines, if you were to enquire about a favorite 100% Grenache wine from this area, you'd be hard pressed to find a suggestion. Grenache benefits greatly from blending with grapes with firmer tannins and higher natural acidity. That said, the warming California climates are giving Grenache a new stage on which to strut its stuff, on a definitively unexplored stage.

GLASS: The pretty perfume of red fruit from Grenache is enough to make you swoon. Huzzah for Edaphos for capturing that aromatic lightning in a bottle here in California, as it's not always easy. The brightness of color, too, brings great joy to our geeky Grenache guzzling gizzards. To paraphrase one of our dearest mentors, Ian D'Agata:

'A good Cannonau (aka Grenache from Sardegna) cannot be black.'

He is identifying here the possible downfalls of both the instinct to blend with darker grape varieties, and the sometimes needless use of new oak. Not saying that wines made with those two approaches / attributes are of less quality by any means. Only that the purity of Grenache without them is quite worthy of celebration. This is such a lovely and purely vibrant Grenache.