



2010 *SUBIDA*, TOCAI FRIULANO HONEA VINEYARD, SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

Yes, this is Tocai Friulano, although not in a style that might be expected. While winemaker/owner Steve Clifton always makes wines for the table and for those who enjoy a good meal with a great bottle of wine, he makes Subida for himself. Clifton loves making this wine, although “making it” has an entirely different connotation when it comes to Subida. But one thing is always present: Steve’s excitement about taking Tocai Friulano in such a different and interesting direction.

Clifton calls out new pioneers from Friuli such Stanko Radikon, Edi Kante, Ales Kristancic of Movia and Jasko Gravener as inspirations for Subida. Add to that the Clifton’s frequent travels to Friuli, which is becoming known as the epicenter of the resurgence of orange wines, and the winemaker’s continuing “what if” curiosity and it is easy to see how Subida continues to evolve. The name Subida itself tells of the passion inherent in this wine, as Steve and Chrystal were married at La Subida restaurant in the midst of some of the most famous Collio Goriziano vineyards in Friuli. Their wedding wine? A complex, textural, fascinating Friulano made and presented to them by friends from the region.

This wine’s journey is more about what didn’t happen. One half of the grapes were de-stemmed, the balance left as whole cluster. The grapes were then foot-stomped to gently break open the berries, and fermentation occurred with indigenous yeast. Made as if it were a red wine, the golden must was punched down twice each day and upon completion of fermentation, gravity racked to neutral barrels. Left on their gross lees, the barrels were not topped during aging, malolactic fermentation was neither inhibited nor encouraged and the wines were not sulphured.. Once ready to bottle, Subida was neither fined nor filtered. This is a natural, living and breathing wine!

Subida is an “orange wine”. The skin contact during fermentation, extended maceration and deliberate use of oxidation during aging results in a wine of honesty and vibrancy. Orange wines are not really about the color, although they do pick up a golden, sometimes salmon-colored hue from the skin contact. They are more about the acceptance of oxygen in the winemaking cycle, and this creates a textural wine that constantly evolves in the glass, and a bottle that will stay fresh for days (because it is already oxygen stable).

Currently a favorite of sommeliers, orange wines are atypical wines in their look, mouthfeel and taste. Subida announces its presence with a hazy, golden, straw-like hue, and an intriguing visual “depth”. A swirl produces an astounding surprise, with fresh notes of apricot mingling with bay-leaf, herbs and spice on the nose. Happy to be one again with oxygen, Subida enjoys time and swirling to fully strut its stuff. A sip first delivers dried peach and fig, and an astonishing texture that is velvety, weighty, light and zesty all at the same time. More herbal notes – anise seed, mace – mingle with honeycomb and hazelnut flavors. The finish has a pleasing and palate cleansing note of almond bitters. Fascinating, intriguing and somewhat wine-geeky, Subida will continue to evolve in the glass, in the bottle and in the cellar.

“Subida continues to captivate me,” notes Clifton. “Truly a “natural” wine. I find it interesting that the above reads as a list of things that were not done to the wine instead of what was.”

We recommend serving at cellar temperature. We recommend serving with simple fish or chicken dishes that are herb-infused, or turkey breast with apricots.

