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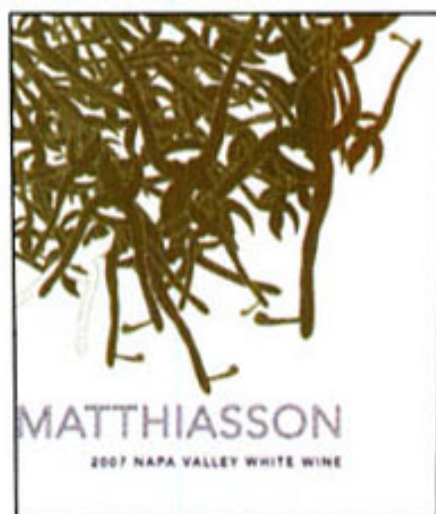
100 top
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White Blends



96 | Matthiasson \$35

2007 Napa Valley White Steve Matthiasson, a viticulture consultant, got turned onto ribolla gialla by George Vare, who planted some of the Friuli native in Oak Knoll (Wolfgang Weber reported on their work in *W&S*, 2/09). Matthiasson assembles this blend from Vare's ribolla, along with sauvignon blanc (60 percent) from Ryans Vineyard (a gravelly patch on the valley floor) and old dry-farmed, head-pruned semillon (22) at Yount Mill Vineyard. He picks it early, and blends it before fermentation is complete, then keeps it on the lees to sustain the wine's freshness. At 13.3 percent alcohol, it's a little miracle of a white wine from Napa, which Matthiasson describes as having "a spiritual connection to Friuli, Italy and Graves, France." The Friuli reference comes first, with filigreed flavors of litchi, lime and gunflint; the Graves association comes with a day of air, when the freshness and elegance of the wine is in full flower. Tasted in the midst of crab season, it seemed about as Pacific a white as you might ever find from the Napa Valley. (220 cases)
Matthiasson Family Vintners, Napa, CA