

ANCIENT PEAKS

2016 | OYSTER RIDGE

PASO ROBLES, CALIFORNIA | SANTA MARGARITA RANCH



OYSTER RIDGE

OVERVIEW

Each year, we craft the limited-edition Oyster Ridge cuvée to exemplify our finest winemaking efforts. The name Oyster Ridge honors an outcropping that always astonishes visitors to our estate Margarita Vineyard. Here, large white oyster fossils are literally spilling out of the ground, fostering the type of calcium-rich soil that is coveted by winemakers worldwide. The 2016 vintage is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon (51%), Merlot (32%), Petit Verdot (9%), Cabernet Franc (4%) and Malbec (4%), all from meticulously farmed vineyard blocks cultivated for the Oyster Ridge program.

VINEYARD

The proliferation of sea fossils at Oyster Ridge is the most vivid example of the complex geology found at Margarita Vineyard. This namesake Oyster Ridge blend comes from specific spots at Margarita Vineyard that have proven to produce remarkable fruit. These include the rows of Cabernet Sauvignon along the uniformly exposed hilltop of Block 49, where rocky, well-drained soils of shale and ancient sea bed produce small, intensely flavored grape berries. All vineyard subsections designated for Oyster Ridge are isolated at the start of the growing season, and they are fastidiously tended to maximize the fruit's potential and meet the standards of the Oyster Ridge program. Margarita Vineyard stands alone as the southernmost vineyard in the Paso Robles region, nestled into the rugged Santa Lucia Mountain range just 14 miles from the Pacific Ocean in the Santa Margarita Ranch AVA.

WINEMAKING

In 2016, steady weather and small yields produced fruit with extraordinary evenness and concentration, resulting in perhaps the finest vintage in our winery's history. Fermentation of the Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Malbec took place in 10-ton fermenters to generate added thermal energy for enhanced extraction. After fermentation, each varietal lot was aged separately for 23 months in premium French oak barrels. Two barrels of Cabernet Sauvignon were aged in French-American hybrid oak barrels for added dimension and notes of spice. The final blend was assembled from only those barrels that exhibited exemplary complexity, structure and aging potential. The Cabernet Sauvignon sets the tone with broad, polished layers and classic varietal expression. The Merlot establishes a core of dark, velvety fruit, and the Petit Verdot contributes color, structure and aromatic nuances of cedar and pencil shavings. Malbec adds undertones of juicy red fruit, while the Cabernet Franc enlivens the aromatic profile with suggestions of violets and savory spice.

TASTING NOTES

The 2016 Oyster Ridge offers a sumptuous bouquet of black berry and black currant with notes of crème de cassis, violets, vanilla bean, cedar and graphite. On the palate, the wine is exquisitely dense and integrated, showing chewy layers of black fruits interwoven with accents of caramel, mint, cinnamon spice and new oak. Fine-grained tannins and sleek acidity bring a resounding conclusion to what is nothing less than a blockbuster vintage for Oyster Ridge. This is a wine that will generously evolve in the bottle for years to come.

VINEYARD:

Margarita Vineyard

VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

Cabernet Sauvignon 51%
Merlot 32%
Petit Verdot 9%
Cabernet Franc 4%
Malbec 4%

SOIL TYPE:

Ancient Sea Bed

HARVEST DATES:

October 8 (Merlot, Block 7)
October 14 (Merlot)
October 26 (Petit Verdot, Block 35)
October 26 (Malbec, Block 45A)
October 26 (Cabernet, Block 49 Hilltop)
October 26 (Petit Verdot, Block 35)
October 28 (Cabernet Franc, Block 9)
October 28 (Cabernet Franc, Block 9)

AGING REGIMEN:

23 Months in French (96%) and American (4%) oak barrels
80% new oak

FINAL ANALYSIS:

Alcohol: 14.7%
TA: .65
pH: 3.68

CASES PRODUCED:

1,186

SRP:

\$60

