

ANCIENT PEAKS

2018 | **MERLOT**

PASO ROBLES, CALIFORNIA | SANTA MARGARITA RANCH



OVERVIEW

Merlot excels at our estate Margarita Vineyard and has been a mainstay in our small family of wines since day one. Here, ancient sea bed soils combine with a long growing season to yield a Merlot with silky dark fruit flavors and a luscious texture, resulting in what has become one of the Paso Robles region's most notable Merlots.

VINEYARD

The 2018 vintage comes from two Merlot blocks that exhibit their own distinct qualities, bringing natural complexity and dimension to the finished wine. These blocks are situated along the slopes of an uplifted ancient sea bed, where the well-drained, calcium-rich soils are distinguished by decomposing oyster fossils. Block 15 is a newer planting that delivers dark, velvety black fruit flavors. Meanwhile, Block 7 yields a more nuanced character with both softness and power.

WINEMAKING

Our aim is to capture the signature velvety fruit character of Merlot while showcasing the fine structure inherent to Margarita Vineyard. The 2018 growing season started on a cool note after abundant March rains, helping forge a long, late harvest season. After destemming, the lots were cold soaked for 48 hours prior to fermentation for a gentle extraction of initial color and flavor. After fermentation and light pressing, the lots were aged for 21 months in a combination of French (60%) and American (40%) oak barrels, 25 percent of which featured new oak. A small lot of Petite Sirah was incorporated into the final blend to accentuate the wine's color and palate depth.

TASTING NOTES

The 2018 Merlot presents warm aromas of boysenberry, plum and toasted oak with hints of violet and baking spice. A broad, velvety mouthfeel unfolds with flavors of black cherry, blackberry and creamy vanilla with hints of minerality. Gravelly tannins and fine acidity add stature to a deep, chewy finish.

CUISINE PAIRING

The luscious textures of the 2018 Merlot are an excellent match for pasta with pan-seared lamb medallions, mushroom risotto, pasta ragu and steak with garlic butter.

VINEYARD:

Margarita Vineyard

VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

Merlot 95%
Petite Sirah 5%

SOIL TYPE:

Ancient Sea Bed

HARVEST DATES:

October 11 - 12 (Merlot Block 15)
October 31 (Block 7)
September 29 (Petite Sirah)

AGING REGIMEN:

21 months in French and American oak barrels (25% new)

FINAL ANALYSIS:

Alcohol: 14.8%
TA: .60
pH: 3.54

CASES PRODUCED:

3,975

SRP:

\$20



FAMILY OWNED | ESTATE GROWN

MERLOT