

ANCIENT PEAKS

2019 | **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 2019 vintage comes from four 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, Blocks 5 and 7 yield a more nuanced character with both softness and power. Finally, Block 4 presents a brighter spectrum of red fruit flavors.

WINEMAKING

Our aim is to capture the signature velvety fruit character of Merlot while showcasing the fine structure inherent to Margarita Vineyard. The 2019 growing season was marked by a cool spring and early summer, followed by moderate conditions for long, steady ripening through harvest, with low yields fostering excellent concentration. After harvesting and destemming, each lot was 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, 20 percent of which featured new oak. A small five-percent contribution of Petit Verdot brought enhanced color and structure to the final blend.

TASTING NOTES

The 2019 Merlot offers sleek aromas of plum, cherry and mocha with captivating hints of toasted oak. A bright, supple texture floods the palate with brambly flavors of blackberry, black cherry and pomegranate. Layered complexity is revealed with suggestions of cedar and cigar box, all converging on a luscious, lifted finish.

CUISINE PAIRING

The rich, juicy qualities of the 2019 Merlot are an excellent match for baked pork tenderloin, crispy duck breast, mushroom risotto and pan-seared sirloin with garlic butter.

VINEYARD:

Margarita Vineyard

VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

Merlot 95%
Petit Verdot 5%

SOIL TYPE:

Ancient Sea Bed

HARVEST DATES:

October 10 (Merlot Block 5)
October 12 (Block 7)
October 28 (Block 4)
October 12 (Block 15)
October 31 (Petit Verdot)

AGING REGIMEN:

19 months in French and American oak barrels (20% new)

FINAL ANALYSIS:

Alcohol: 14.8%
pH: 3.71
TA: .59

SRP:

\$20



MERLOT

FAMILY OWNED | ESTATE GROWN