

# ANCIENT PEAKS

2021 | **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 fruit flavors and luscious textures, resulting in what has become one of the Paso Robles region's most notable Merlots.

## VINEYARD

The 2021 vintage comes from three blocks at Margarita Vineyard that exhibit their own distinct qualities, bringing added dimension to the finished wine. These blocks are situated along the slopes of an uplifted ancient sea bed, which provides the type of highly calcareous soils that are coveted by winemakers worldwide. Block 15 is a newer planting that delivers velvety black fruit flavors. Meanwhile, Block 5 yields a more nuanced character with both softness and power. Finally, Block 7 brings enhanced dark fruit intensity and richness. 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. The mountain peaks act as a gateway for cool marine air, resulting in an extended growing season that yields fruit with uncommon depth and structure. The peaks are also testaments to the tectonic forces that created Margarita Vineyard's rare diversity of soils, ultimately fostering natural complexity in our wines.

## WINEMAKING

Our aim is to capture the signature velvety fruit character of Merlot while showcasing the cooler climate nuances and structure inherent to Margarita Vineyard. The 2021 growing season was marked by temperate weather, extended ripening and dry conditions that fostered excellent flavor concentration—all converging to create a standout vintage in Paso Robles. 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 17 months in a combination of French (50%) and American (50%) oak barrels, 25 percent of which featured new oak. We combine French and American oak barrels to cultivate complementary flavor profiles that enhance overall wine complexity.

## TASTING NOTES

The 2021 Merlot presents inviting aromas of dried cherry, currant, herb, clove spice and toasted oak. A plush mouthfeel unfolds with deep red fruit flavors accented by cassis, blackberry, tobacco, peppercorn, vanilla and dark chocolate. Supple tannins and energetic acidity add length to a smooth, rounded finish.

## CUISINE PAIRING

The beautifully balanced weight of the 2021 Merlot makes an excellent match for beef stew, veal chops, vegetable lasagna and lamb shanks in red wine sauce.

## VINEYARD:

Margarita Vineyard

## SOIL TYPE:

Ancient Sea Bed

## VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

Merlot 100%

## HARVEST DATES:

October 2 (Block 15)

October 5 (Block 5)

October 6 (Block 7)

## AGING REGIMEN:

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

## FINAL ANALYSIS:

Alcohol: 14.3%

TA: .59

pH: 3.71



MERLOT

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