

ANCIENT PEAKS

v. 2023 | **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 2023 vintage comes from four 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, Blocks 4 and 5 yield a more nuanced character with both softness and power. Finally, Block 10 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 2023 vintage was marked by relatively cool spring and summer conditions, followed by a pitch-perfect warming trend that brought the harvest season to a long and steady conclusion—making it a true winemaker's vintage. After fermentation and light pressing, the Merlot lots were aged for 18 months in a combination of French (75%) and American (25%) oak barrels, 20 percent of which featured new oak. We combine French and American oak barrels with our Merlot to cultivate complementary flavor profiles and to enhance overall complexity.

TASTING NOTES

The 2023 Merlot offers an abundant bouquet of cherry, plum, sandalwood and caramel with graphite-infused complexity. The palate entry is sleek, soft and seamless, weaving red and black fruit flavors with accents of savory herb, fresh oak and cedarwood. A supple structure gains length and lift with beautifully balanced acidity.

CUISINE PAIRING

The 2023 Merlot is fresh, silky and complex, making it a suitable match for pork tenderloin, duck breast, garlic-rosemary beef tips and roasted vegetables.

VINEYARD:

Margarita Vineyard

SOIL TYPE:

Ancient Sea Bed 

VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

Merlot 97%

Petite Sirah 3%

HARVEST DATES:

October 18 and 28 (Block 15)

October 16 (Blocks 5, 7 & 10)

October 26 (Petite Sirah)

AGING REGIMEN:

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

FINAL ANALYSIS:

Alcohol: 13.5%

TA: .57

pH: 3.49



MERLOT



FAMILY OWNED | ESTATE GROWN

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