

ELEGANT & EXPRESSIVE

2018 CANNONBALL CALIFORNIA MERLOT

Raise your glass We find that Merlot expresses its most appealing varietal character when grown in regions that experience warm afternoon temperatures balanced by cool nights and mornings. Sonoma Valley offers this balance - its rolling hills, narrow valleys and shaded canyons offer a diverse array of terroir to achieve a unique fruit/mineral/herb complex that we seek. To add a streak of rounder, riper fruit we have blended 8% Merlot sourced from the warmer Central Coast appellation.

Winemaking Harvested at first light when the fruit is still chilled from the nighttime temperatures, the grapes are handpicked and delivered to the winery where they are de-stemmed and partially crushed to release their juice. A three-day cold soak begins immediately after the crush. This cold environment initiates the gentle extraction of lively fruit and berry flavors and aromas. Once the cold soak has liberated the desired elements, the fruit is allowed to naturally warm before it is inoculated with a proprietary yeast strain to begin fermentation. We are careful and gentle in handling Merlot as it is delicate and prone to oxidation, so punch downs and pump-overs are focused in the early stages of fermentation and we minimize 'working' the must in the final days of alcoholic fermentation. After pressing off the skins and settling, this wine is sent to French oak where it rests and matures, with only a couple of rackings for (blending purposes) 26 months prior to being bottled.

Aromas A nose rich in aromas of plum fruit, cherry and creme caramel.

Taste and Flavors The palate is focused but generous echoing the plum and cherry fruit evident on the nose and broadening scope to reveal a briar/boysenberry fruit profile showing a bit of the tanginess expected from red fruit and keeping the palate lively. A wonderful balance of earth tones with hints of graphite and mineral that add dimension to the fruit. The tannins are mild and a classic note of cherry stem brings appeal to the finish.

Technically:

AVA: California • Alc: 13.5% • pH: 3.54 • TA: 6.4 g/100mL RS: 0.20%

