

ELEGANT & EXPRESSIVE

2020 CANNONBALL CALIFORNIA MERLOT

Raise your glass Mendocino County is our darling when it comes to sourcing Merlot. With its warm afternoons, rich varied soils, elevation, ocean breezes, and the reliable morning fog pattern, the region provides an excellent climate for maturing the blue and red fruit flavors that we prize in Merlot. A full 80% of this blend is sourced from the rolling hills and vistas of this stunning appellation. The balance of the blend celebrates the diversity of California vineyards; Mendocino for its refined tannins, small parcels from Paso Robles for some midpalate volume, and Sonoma County where the understated elegance of the fruit adds a vein of mineral complexity.

Winemaking Merlot is surprisingly fragile and requires thoughtful handling in the cellar. Early morning harvest is followed by partial crushing of grapes and a three day cold soak to extract color and structure up-front. At the end of the cold soak the tanks are warmed and inoculated with our select yeast strains to initiate a short, minimally handled fermentation. We generally prefer to pull Merlot off skins just prior to dryness to allow the fermentation to finish in oak or tank in the absence of its skins and seeds which may break down toward the end of fermentation. Minimal introduction of oxygen is desired and great care is taken to preserve the fruit forward notes. French oak aging is employed utilizing about 20% new oak which enhances the underlying structure and offers a framework for the fruit, contributing a caramel-laced note that weaves through the fruit, earth, and mineral aspects of the wine.

Aromas A nose of dark red fruit, blueberry compote, loamy earth, and toasty oak.

Taste and Flavors Plum, blackberry and hibiscus fruit on the palate with soft notes of baking spices. Berry-driven and savory, the mid-palate is juicy, generous, and round with soft, supple tannins on the entry that become firmer and more refined on the finish.

Technically:

AVA: California • Alc: 13.5% • pH: 3.55 • TA: 6.3g/100mL RS: 0.27%

