



2022 MOTLEY PURIST

TASTING NOTES

The Motley Purist is, as you'd expect, full of contradictions. He's quite reserved, as well, holding his (tasting) notes close to his vest, and taking a while to open up. His aromas are initially mostly on the earthy side: loamy, toasty, licorice-ish, with maybe some hints of black currant to let you know that he isn't all gruffness and bluster. As you get to know him, he'll open up to reveal more of these pleasing fruit facets: raspberry and cherry – but accented with some peppery spice. Moving beyond the surface at long last, the flavors in the mouth continue this bad-boy personality, with black cherry candy, tar, black plum and pepper all present. Plenty of tannin means that he'll retain his grip on your palate even after he's gone, not wanting to be forgotten. What a character!

Dry/full-bodied. Medium plus tannin, medium acid, dark fruit flavors

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Since the day we opened our tasting room, visitors have been asking us if we have a Merlot. No, we'd say. No way. Never. Everyone else is doing that, and badly. Not our jam. We are purists about not making Merlot. But, like so many varietals, Merlots from Washington just taste better to me than ones from elsewhere (and by elsewhere I mean California, where I initially got into wine ;-). Deeper. More flavorful. More interesting. So when I was looking for an early-ripening red to add to our production, I looked to Merlot, and our *purism* became *motley*. *Yup, it's merlot*. Plug **that** into your anagram generator.

Composition

100% Merlot

Vineyard

Elephant Mountain Vineyard

Appellation

Rattlesnake Hills, Yakima Valley

Harvest Date

September 19, 2022

Harvest specs

21.7 brix, pH 3.97, TA 3 g/l

Crush Pad

Destem and light crush

Saignee

No

Yeast

D254

Fermentation

Small open-top fermentors, punched down by hand

Malolactic Fermentation

Yes

Time on Skins

13 days

Aging

22 months in barrels

Oak

28%

Fining/Filtration

Cross-flow filtration

Alcohol

14.5%

Production

217 cases

Bottled

July 30, 2024



eleven



PAIRINGS

Mushroom risotto, roast lamb, dark chocolate, reading emo stanzas at a poetry slam, aged gouda, roast duck, truffle pasta, gazing into the infinite blackness of the night sky.

VINTAGE DETAILS

2022 was a very unusual vintage in Washington state. Conditions started to warm relatively early in the spring, leading to fears of frost damage, but then it cooled off a bit...and stayed cooled off through May and into a chilly Juneuary. Flowering (which is the event that really kicks off the grape timing) was 2-3 weeks behind average, which meant that harvest would be too. Summer temps were relatively even, with a short heat spike in August. It has been quite a while since we didn't harvest any grapes until September, and this year we didn't pick until the end of the first week, on September 7, and our next grapes were not until the 12th. Not only did harvest start late, ripening progressed slowly. The whole vintage was saved by unusually warm and dry conditions through September into October that facilitated beautiful ripening. In terms of the effects on the grapes, the vintage was terrific for our style of moderate alcohol, firm acidity, and just-ripe flavors. Acids were a little higher than usual in some of the whites, which is a delight.

GRAPE VARIETY INFO

Merlot is the second most widely-planted grape variety on the planet, with about 20% less acreage than King Cab and 15% more than 3rd-place Tempranillo. It is perhaps most famously grown on the right bank of the Bordeaux River, where it is often the dominant component of the blend. Like Cabernet, it has small berries and generally small, loose clusters.

FUN FACTS

We don't put the grape variety name on the label in order to stave off the preconceptions of those still suffering from *Sideways* bias (in one scene the character Miles asserts on his way into dinner: "I am NOT drinking any F\$#@!G merlot! If anyone orders merlot, I'M LEAVING."). This scene must have tapped into latent merlot hatred among many, because it caused a substantial and decades-long drop in demand for merlot (and a parallel rise in the fortunes of Miles's favorite grape, Pinot Noir).

AWARDS

Silver, San Francisco Chronicle Wine Awards



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