



2021 LA RONDE

TASTING NOTES

The deep dark ruby color of this wine does not mislead. While restrained on the nose, the wine fills the mouth with dark fruit. Swirls of cassis and blackberry surround you, like swimming in the whorls left behind by a vanishing octopus. The experience is so entrancing and goes on so long that you might forget where you are. When you come to, you will be delighted to find your glass has more in it, because you will want it to go on forever. Dry/full-bodied; medium plus tannin, medium acid, dark fruit flavors.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Creating a blend is one of the best ways to make the most out of any vintage, and it is part of what makes the La Ronde a standout, year after year. La Ronde revives the ancient historical blending practice of Bordeaux, which, before Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot took over, was dominated by Malbec and Petit Verdot. Cabernet and Merlot ripen more consistently in Bordeaux, but the original blend is a beautiful thing if you can grow the grapes for it, like we can here in Washington.

Composition

52% Malbec, 32% Petit Verdot, 16% Cabernet Sauvignon

Appellation

Washington

Crush Pad

Destem and light crush

Fermentation

Small open-top fermenters, punched down by hand

Aging

23 months in barrels

Oak

18%

Fining/Filtration

No fining/ cross-flow filtration

Alcohol

14.2%

Production

457 cases

Bottled

August 8, 2023



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FOOD PAIRINGS

Pair it with steak, meat pies, posh burgers, smoked salmon, roast duck, cured meats, sharp cheddar, aged gouda, mimolette... yum! Also try it with cozy meals and occasions like meatloaf, lasagne, sitting by the fire and winter holiday dinners.

VINTAGE DETAILS

2021 will be remembered by many as the vintage of the “heat dome”, though it was also marked by significant wildfire smoke in the western Yakima Valley. The growing season started off warm and dry, with bud break and bloom both a little bit on the early side. For five days at the end of June, though, the state saw triple-digit temperatures that shattered all records. This happened during the early phase of fruit growth and would lead to very low crop levels or uneven ripening in many varieties. It also had some flavor impacts on some varieties: you may notice differences from other vintages, particularly in the LEM and Tempranillo. More significantly for Eleven was the smoke from the Schneider Springs fire on the east flank of Mt. Rainier that blew down into the Yakima valley on a daily basis from the middle of August through the middle of September. This was the largest wildfire in the state in a big wildfire season, with over 100,000 acres burned. Since we get more than half of our fruit from the very western end of the Yakima Valley, this was hugely stressful for us. Ultimately, the only varieties significantly affected were the Petit Verdot and Mourvedre, which we had to leave behind in the vineyard because they tasted very smoky. Some other varieties we had concerns about, but the wines turned out great across the board.

GRAPE VARIETY INFO

Many years of experimenting with different blends led to the multiples-of-11%-combination we’ve settled on for the Rosso. The Syrah brings body, the Lemberger brightens and keeps it from getting too serious, and the Mourvedre keeps it smooth. Believe it or not, the 1% of Viognier actually makes a difference you can taste, because it’s so aromatic.

AWARDS

Double Gold, San Francisco Chronicle

FUN FACTS

La Ronde translates as “the Tour”, which is a part of the name of many races, but in this case the race is the Ronde, the Ronde van Vlaanderen, the Tour of Flanders, another of the biggest single-day races of the year. Like a wine blend, it’s a race that brings together various components to produce a great champion. In the case of the race, those components are 160 miles of narrow winding roads, wind, and short but very steep hills paved with cobblestones. If that sounds challenging, it is intentionally so – for most, we recommend sticking with the wine. It goes down much easier but still has a finish to remember.



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