



THE VINEYARD

I love a good Merlot, and this wine is evidence of Merlot done right! The vineyard is superb, the winemaking is tailored, and the wine is well structured for a wonderful drinking experience. Bold black fruit aromas with integrated earthy-spice make for a developed, bold nose and a good fulfilling taste. A full palate shows weight, while the addition of Cabernet Franc adds blackberry, cassis and prune. The fruit is 100% sourced from the Frankel Family Estate Vineyard. The Merlot block is located high above the tasting room in the clay-loam soils of the estate ridgeline hillsides. Cabernet Franc is grown in the valley where cooler temperatures lead to a longer growing season, with polished tannins being showcased and pepper notes shining through. 2017 was a solid growing season. Favorable weather was seen from Spring through the Fall and, thusly, healthy berries were harvested at peak ripeness.

THE WINEMAKING

The carefully harvested fruit was picked at night and processed in the early morning hours at Sculpterra's onsite winemaking facility. Managing the fruit early in the day preserved the freshest fruity and delicate aromas conceivable. Fermentation took place in small half-ton and one-ton macro bins. Three distinct yeast strains were used in the fermentation of this wine, offering unique flavors and complexity to the wine's final blend. The wine aged in a combination of big 500L barrels and small 225L barrels. Tasting and topping was done each month as the wine aged, slowly developing subtle flavors attributed to micro-oxidation in the barrels. In total, the wine aged for a lengthy 22 months in barrel, before bottling a total of 240 cases in August 2019.

THE FACTS

Varietal Composition: 78% Merlot
& 22% Cabernet Franc
Appellation: Paso Robles
Vineyard: Frankel Family Estate
Block: Hillside & Lago de los Patos
Finished Alcohol: 15.0%
Residual Sugar(G/F): 0.04 g/100ml
Total Acid: 0.66 g/100ml
pH: 3.75
Bottling Date: August 14, 2019
Release Date: December 1, 2020
Total Production: 240 Cases

THE TASTE

At 78% Merlot and 22% Cabernet Franc, this is a splendid wine, still plush in tannins but overflowing with age-worthy dark fruits and elements of zesty spice. No new oak was used in the barrel program, yet the wine shows off a spicy character along with the richness and crisp edge of the red fruit flavors. It's amazing how much the Cabernet Franc shines in this blend! The tannins are prominent, contributing a puckering feeling throughout the wine's broad mouthfeel. Don't be fooled though, the beauty of Merlot is still entirely evident with notes of strawberry jam, subtle cherry and even chocolate covered plums.

-Paul Frankel, Winemaker