Austin Hope

2024 SAINT MACAIRE

Austin Hope is in constant motion and a lifelong learner. He continually pushes his team to explore and experiment with new varietals, new techniques and concepts that will ultimately improve the quality of his wines for everyone to enjoy. When a particular trial or experiment exceeds expectations, Austin is able to share it with the Cellar Club. These small production wines are truly the result of his lifelong passion and yours to enjoy.

HARVEST NOTES

Our 2024 growing season rainfall was above normal following the previous rain season of nearly double the average rainfall. The soil in 2024 was, generally, at full water capacity and a good root flush occurred, helping the overall health of the vines. There were two major frost events in April that affected the crop size in many, but not all, districts. The growing season was cool, and growth was slow. Most of the growing season saw a two-week delay through late summer. There were a few small heat events in summer, and harvest was delayed by two weeks. By late September, there was an extended heatwave that lasted through the first week of October. This heat period assisted vines with berry maturity and harvest was quickly in full effect. We completed harvest on October 30.

Saint Macaire is one of the three “Lost Bordeaux” varieties and under 30 acres are planted in California. We planted 5 acres in 2020 on one of our favorite vineyard sites (now owned by Hope Family Wines as of 2025). The vineyard is in the Creston District of the Paso Robles AVA in an ancient river plain at 1,200 feet elevation. Soils here are gravely in nature with well-integrated calcareous matter. The microclimate and elevation shield the vineyard from spring frosts, and the proximity to the Templeton Gap allows for cooling, maritime breezes to cool the vineyard during summer months.

WINEMAKING NOTES

Our Saint Macaire was hand-picked and fermented in five-ton fermenters. Daily pump-overs for ten days built color and tannin, after which each lot was tasted and analyzed to determine the length of extended maceration. The wines remained on their skins for an additional 10–15 days before being barreled down as separate lots into 100% twice used French oak, where they aged for 15 months. In February 2026, the lots were blended and transferred to 50% new French oak and 50% twice-used French oak, where the wine matured for 6 months. A final racking took place just before bottling in July 2026.

TASTING NOTES

The nose opens with layered aromas of blackberry, black cherry, fresh herbs like thyme and sage, and subtle notes of earth and stone. On the palate, fine, dusty tannins frame flavors of black currant and ripe dark berries, complemented by a touch of baking spice. Full-bodied yet refined, the wine displays impressive structure and balance, carrying through to a lingering, elegant finish.

TECHNICAL NOTES

VARIETAL(S): 100% Saint Macaire
VINEYARD: Tufera Farms, Creston District
HARVEST DATE: 10/07/24
OAK PROGRAM: 15 Months in Twice-Used French Oak followed by 6 Months in 50% New French Oak and 50% Twice Used French Oak
TIME IN OAK: 21 Months
ALCOHOL: 14.50%
pH: 3.75
TOTAL ACIDITY: 0.56 g tartaric/100mL

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