

Austin Hope

2020 MERLOT

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

The 2020 growing season and harvest was near normal in some ways and very unusual in others. Rainfall was 12% below average with the bulk of the storms occurring in early winter and early spring. Spring frost threats were mild. Vine growth and berry development was normal through spring. Then, Summer brought relentless heatwaves that lasted for days at a time. Wildfires began erupting throughout the state and the region was inundated with smoke from fires burning both to the north and south of Paso Robles from early August through the end of September. This pattern slowed berry development. October was warm and dry, which helped to quickly mature clusters. Harvest was condensed and flurried as most fruit ripened at the same time. Yields were down by 20% but initial and thorough testing showed no damage from the smoke and very promising quality.

WINEMAKING NOTES

After harvest, three vineyard lots were fermented individually in small stainless-steel tanks for 10-14 days. Extended macerations and carefully managed pump overs enhanced the extraction of color and tannin. The lots were aged separately for 6 months in 93% new American Oak and 7% once used French Oak. The wine was racked only once during its cellar life where 24% of the blend was moved onto new French Oak. The final racking occurred just prior to filtering and bottling in late July of 2021.

TASTING NOTES

Often an overlooked varietal, our Merlot is a classic display of this noble grape. On the nose, dark berry flavors and sweat vanilla intertwine with spicy pepper. Rich flavors of black cherry, sweet plum and dark chocolate evolve with the rich fine tannins that linger through the finish.

TECHNICAL NOTES

VARIETAL(S): 100% Merlot

AVA: Paso Robles

HARVEST DATE: 9/24/20 and 10/10/2020

OAK PROGRAM: 6 Months in 93% New American Oak, 7% Once Used French Oak | 3 Months in 24% New French Oak, 76% New American Oak

TIME IN OAK: 9 Months

ALCOHOL: 15.00%

pH: 3.82

TOTAL ACIDITY: 0.54 g tartaric/100mL

CELLAR SELECT SERIES

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