



MADROÑA

2016 Malbec—Signature Collection

Malbec

Serendipity is often the name of the game in wine. We started producing Malbec in 1993 for one reason . . . to blend! It was the fifth Bordeaux in our Quintet adding aromatics and color. But it was obvious from its first harvest that our mountain Malbec was something special.

The cool climate at our 2,800-foot-elevation vineyards produces a wine that is intensely fruity, intensely colored and intensely weighty with surprisingly soft tannins. Dense yet balanced, this playful variety continually intrigues our palates year after year.

The Vineyards

A blend of three different small plantings in our Enyé Vineyards in Pleasant Valley and the home vineyards at Madroña, the vines are vigorous and strong. At the Enyé Vineyards, one vineyard is grafted on to a 30-year old Sauvignon Blanc vineyard and the other on the devigorating rootstock 101-14. With a definite northern exposure at 2,800 feet, the climate is cooler, thus extending this early-ripening variety. Production levels hover around 1.5 tons/acre, due mainly to the smallness of the clusters. At the Madroña Vineyards, the vines are grafted onto Merlot (as rootstock) with the effect of taming the vine slightly. The west-facing slope of this vineyard produces ripe, dense wines with the persistent low yields of the variety. The blend of the two vineyard locations results in a Malbec with balance and an intensity of fruit that other varieties can't match.

The 2016 Vintage

This youthful and expressive Malbec not only has the density we look for, but it also has the balance that sometimes gets overlooked in larger production Malbecs in the market. The '16 vintage had great weather into the fall, giving the vines just a bit more hangtime (picking early October). The results are a complex set of aromas of cherries, plums, vanilla and a hint of varietal earthiness. This fruit-oriented nose works its way into the wine's entry with more pie cherry and high-tone fruit up front. The mid-palate has the dark cherry once again with notes of spice (black pepper and cardamom) lingering into the finish. But as I mentioned above, the hallmark of this wine is its balance. From the first sip through its mountain-grown tannins in the end, the wine is a seamless and linear experience. That may not be sexy, but it's exciting to the winemaker and bodes well for this Malbec's longevity! (Cellaring Potential: 7-10+ years!)

Suggested Food Pairings

Lamb, mushrooms, savory spices, and reduction sauces (with cherries, berries and/or blue cheese). Think heartier fare with this wine, and don't worry about putting it down in the cellar for a few years either!

Facts

Appellation: El Dorado, Estate Grown

Blend: 90% Malbec, 2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Merlot

Fermentation: 14 days on skins in small fermenters

Aging: 20 months in neutral oak barrels

Bottled: June 6, 2018, Production: 340 cases

Alcohol: 13.6%, pH: 3.59, TA: 0.62g/100ml

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