

CHATEAU MONTELENA

Chateau Montelena's 19th century stone structure stands as a quality icon in Napa Valley, consistently producing some of the finest wines in California.



Cabernet Sauvignon 2019

Napa Valley, California

ESTATE

Chateau Montelena's history is one of the deepest and most storied in the Napa Valley and California. Founded just north of Calistoga in 1882, it was one of the largest wineries in the state. Prohibition put an end to Montelena's winemaking, and the next major era began in 1968, when Jim Barrett purchased the estate. Jim fell in love with this exceptional property, blessed with a complex mix of soils, slopes and biodiversity of wildlife and fauna. He had a dream of creating wine at the level of the great First Growths of Bordeaux, and set about replanting the vineyard, outfitting the winery with modern equipment, and studying the processes necessary for farming and winemaking at the highest quality level.

WINE

The wines at Chateau Montelena are often described as having classic "old-world" structure with ripe California fruit, and the Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon is emblematic of this style. These wines tend to have more acid and more moderate alcohol levels as compared to some of the "cult" Cabs. This combination of classic chemistry and California sunshine allows them to offer immediate pleasure and complexity on release, and the ability to develop beautifully.

VINEYARD

Soils: All of the prime vineyard sites have been selected for their alluvium soil profile. These soils provide an earthy, complex and concentrated Cabernet Sauvignon softened by the judicious addition of Merlot. The cobbly, gravelly subsoil makes for deep root penetration and good drainage.

Farming: Chateau Montelena is committed to sustainable farming and produces wine in their solar powered winery.

WINEMAKING

Grape Varieties: 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Merlot

Fermentation: Temperature-controlled stainless steel tanks to allow the wines to ferment slowly and evenly.

Aging: 16 months in French oak barrels (28% new)

Alcohol: 13.8% ABV

VINTAGE

The growing season began cold and wet, typically the harbinger of a late vintage. However, by mid-summer, abundant warm weather had settled in, resulting in very "normal" timing for harvest. Given the plentiful yields, it wasn't a surprise to experience a divergence in ripening across different soils and clones. As to be expected and can be quite beneficial when handled correctly. Thankfully, the weather during September cooperated and despite a few periods when patience was necessary, harvest proceeded smoothly and successfully.

TASTING NOTES

Pure and powerful, this wine opens with fresh blueberries, blackberry pie and cassis. The endless dark fruit is complemented by a range of baking spices: vanilla at first, but also clove and cinnamon. The first sip instantly reveals the character of this Cabernet: dense and chewy with bright red fruit, incredible tension and pure, fine grain tannins. Not only is everything in its place; but the layers of flavor, the depth of the fruit and the sublime texture are constantly in contrast to the dynamic palate, the finish is focused and stout. Abundant cocoa, espresso bean and black pepper dovetail into dark, black fruit while tart raspberry and strawberry jam linger.