



Michael Shaps

2020
MERLOT
MONTICELLO

Varieties

85% Merlot
12% Petit Verdot
3% Tannat

AVA

Monticello

Vineyard

98% Honah Lee
2% Shenandoah Vineyards

Harvest Date

September 2020

Fermentation & Aging

Stainless steel fermenters
and barrel aged 18 months:

100% in neutral French oak

Technical Data

Brix at Harvest: 24

pH: 3.48

TA: 6.3 grams/L

Alc: 13.7%

RS: 0.07%

Bottled: June 6, 2022

Cases Produced: 99

VINEYARD NOTES

Almost all the fruit for this varietal merlot is sourced from Honah Lee vineyard which was planted in 1998 and is located in the Monticello AVA. The vineyard is planted on Davidson Clay soil with southeastern exposure. The remainder comes from our Shenandoah vineyards which benefits from the rain shadow effect from the nearby Blue Ridge mountains which blocks rain clouds from forming, resulting in drier than usual summers.

WINEMAKING NOTES

All of our merlot is hand harvested and transferred to the winery for cooling prior to de-stemming and partial crushing. The grapes are cold soaked for 48 hours. We do not use any commercial yeast strains, but rather create a starter from its own juice during the cold maceration process. During the fermentation, we conduct pump-overs twice daily until the end of fermentation and continue to extend the maceration for several weeks with daily pump-overs.

After pressing and settling, the wine is transferred to French oak barrels of which 100% are neutral oak. After malolactic fermentation is completed during the barrel aging process, the wine is racked and aged for a total of 18 months before bottling. This wine goes into bottle unfiltered and in most years, un-fined as well.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Our 2020 Merlot offers some classic fruit flavors like dark cherry, plum, and cassis on the nose, and is rounded out by savory cooking spices and leather on the finish. The body is medium plus, which is perfect to allow the wines firm structure to shine with bright acidity balancing out medium tannins. This would be a great bottle to pair with leaner cuts of beef like sirloin, filet, or flank steak. Enjoyable now, but can be cellared for about 4-6 years.