



*Michael Shaps*

2021  
**MERLOT**  
MONTICELLO

**Varieties**

99% Merlot

1% Malbec

**AVA**

Monticello

**Vineyard**

100% Honah Lee

**Harvest Date**

September 2021

**Fermentation & Aging**

Stainless steel fermenters  
and barrel aged 20 months:

67% New French oak

33% in neutral French oak

**Technical Data**

Brix at Harvest: 23.4

pH: 3.61

TA: 6.38 grams/L

Alc: 13.1%

RS: 0.01%

Bottled: April 25, 2023

Cases Produced: 74

**VINEYARD NOTES**

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 67% are new, and 33% are neutral oak. After malolactic fermentation is completed during the barrel aging process, the wine is racked and aged for a total of 20 months before bottling. This wine goes into bottle unfiltered and in most years, un-fined as well.

**WINEMAKER'S NOTES**

Our 2021 Merlot offers some rich fruit flavors like blackberry, plum, and cassis on the nose, and is rounded out by savory cooking spices and cedar on the finish. The body is medium plus, which is perfect to allow the wine's 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.