

VINTAGE 2015



PULIDO-WALKER

Cabernet Sauvignon

MELANSON VINEYARD

After three consecutive Napa Valley vintages described variously as “classic,” “textbook,” and “near perfect,” 2015 was a much more eventful growing season across the valley. The upshot: high quality fruit at much lower yields. Unseasonably warm weather early in the year accelerated bud break and bloom, then a cold snap in late spring resulted in an uneven fruit set. Cold spells can have a heightened impact on higher elevation vineyards in particular, as was the case with the Melanson Vineyard in 2015.

Although yield declined by about a third, the shatter we saw during spring bloom paved the way for a big bump in quality and flavor concentration as the remaining fruit matured. “A naturally small crop has a huge effect on quality,” winemaker Thomas Rivers Brown explains. “We can’t duplicate that by dropping fruit.” Berries in the Melanson Vineyard hung longer and in looser clusters for the remainder of the 2015 season, ultimately making the Pulido~Walker Cabernet Sauvignon from this site a better wine.

Winemaking & Tasting Notes

The concentration of this vintage means the wine comes across as more fruit driven than in past years, although the savory notes and dried-herb quality we associate particularly with Clone 7 are still readily apparent. The wine is a pure expression of black fruits, minus the tsunami of tannin one might expect from a vintage this inky dark. The finish is seemingly endless.

The 2015 Pulido~Walker Cabernet Sauvignon from Melanson Vineyard will be drinkable early on, as the naturally more concentrated fruit from a smaller harvest makes the wine more accessible. Still, there is no lack of backbone beneath the surface. Like previous vintages, the 2015 Melanson will not fade over time, but will continue to be a long ager, revealing more of its character as the years progress. We’ve come to believe ten years is the minimum this wine will benefit from resting in bottle, to evolve an ever more savory, black walnut quality, express its tannins, and develop an intellectually interesting complexity.

THOMAS RIVERS BROWN
Winemaker

Data

Appellation: St. Helena, Napa Valley

Varietal: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

Clones: 7 and 337

Aging: 20 months in 100% French oak (90% new barrels)

Barrel Coopers: Darnajou, Ermitage, and Taransaud

Alcohol: 14.5% by vol.

Titrateable Acidity: 0.58

pH: 3.9

Bottling Date: June 8, 2017

Production: 215 Cases

Release Date: August 2018

