

VINTAGE 2021



PULIDO-WALKER

Cabernet Sauvignon

MELANSON VINEYARD

Despite a second consecutive year of drought, and nerve-racking memories of some similar challenges in 2015, the 2021 Napa Valley growing season produced what are proving to be great wines. Yields were tiny for the most part, because many vineyards just didn't have the water resources to develop the full canopy necessary to ripen a typical load of fruit. You really had to be paying attention to get fruit to the finish line in good shape, but the reward was excellent quality across the board: small berries teeming with tannin and flavor.

The lack of groundwater to mitigate irrigation was naturally a chief concern, especially in a hillside vineyard with little soil to speak of. But like the Policy Estate Vineyard, the Melanson Vineyard is cordon pruned, which allowed the vines to conserve resources and stood them in good stead through the season's challenges, despite the fact that they grow in stony ground. Vine maturity in the blocks we pull from also helped. The dramatic reduction in fruit that we saw valley-wide didn't apply here—yield from this site was about average.

What 2021 drove home to us again about the Melanson Vineyard is that when the site is great, that quality shines through, even under less than ideal conditions. With its Pritchard Hill pedigree, the 2021 Pulido~Walker Melanson Cabernet Sauvignon is another incredibly strong offering.

Winemaking & Tasting Notes

The perpetual star of our vineyard blocks here is Clone 7. The 2021 Pulido~Walker Melanson Cabernet Sauvignon once again leads with this clone, which makes up about two-thirds of the blend. Clone 337 continues to impress, and accounts for the remaining third. The wine is characterized by crushed rock, black olive, liquid minerals, and white flowers—flavors and aromatics typical of the eastern Oakville Hills that lend an incredible seriousness. This is a wine that commands your attention.

We were careful about extraction to make sure the tannins didn't become overbearing. Where we typically press our wines after 16 to 18 days in tank, we knew to leave this wine on the skins for no more than 14 days. The result is a nicely structured wine, with ripe and well-integrated tannins that help strengthen the focus and prolong the finish. This is a wine that will linger in memory, not for the vicissitudes of the vintage, but for its arresting presence.

THOMAS RIVERS BROWN
Winemaker

Data

Estate Grown

Varietal: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

Clones: 7 and 337

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

Barrel Coopers: Baron, Darnajou, and Taransaud

Alcohol: 14.9% by vol.

Titrateable Acidity: 5.6 g/L

pH: 3.82

Bottling Date: May 2023

Production: 247 Cases

Site

Appellation: St. Helena, Napa Valley

Acreage: 10.5 acres on Pritchard Hill, adjacent to Colgin Estate

Elevation: 1,100–1,350 ft.

Soil Composition: Fractured serpentine and clay with igneous and seabed rock

Planted: 1999

