

SINGLE VINEYARD SERIES CABERNET SAUVIGNON
2017 SMITH RANCH VINEYARD | LIVERMORE VALLEY



HARVEST NOTES

After a trio of very good to great vintages (2012-14) including what was the finest (2013) in more than 20 years of winemaking in the Livermore Valley, 2017 moved the bar even higher. The winter saw very significant rainfall with the arroyos at the base of the Ghielmetti Vineyard running with water for the first time since at least 2005 (Livermore recorded 14 inches of rain, an average year total in January through February alone; significantly, though, only .20 inches from July through October — Harvest time). Late August through October exhibited nearly perfect weather: temperate, practically no rainfall so that fruit came in with balanced ripeness and higher than average quantity from Ghielmetti Vineyard (~285 tons compared to the 5-year running average of 238 tons).

WINEMAKER NOTES

We have used fruit from the Smith Ranch since 2002 (that wine being one of best we have produced), and in its finest years it yields a wine of power, wonderful mid-palate finesse, and length on the finish. After harvest, fermentation, and barreling down of the wines, we taste all of our Cabernet lots individually and often (we always vinify vineyard sites, and within the vineyard sites—individual clones of Cabernet—separately) to determine which lots have the possibility of being represented as a vineyard-designate and which work best as part of a larger blend. Our single goal is to produce profound wines of great quality and individuality. Each vineyard designate will only be released if it is appreciably more singular and of higher quality than a larger blend.

TASTING NOTES

Generally, one of the more tannic, focused wines of the Single Vineyard Series offerings, this Smith Ranch offering does not deviate appreciably from that paradigm. The nose displays draughts of dark to black fruit notes and an unusual (for this site) dried herbal note that adds nice complexity. On entry, the blackness of fruit is mirrored in the focused flavors of licorice, herbs, cassis and blackberry. In the mid-palate the focused drive of the wine is at its most apparent. The tannins run narrowly along the middle of the tongue, and though this wine is not as rich as the Ghielmetti Vineyard offering, it is decidedly big in heft and structure. On the finish, the tannins persist for a long time and conclude with a mélange of fruit and dried herbs that set this wine apart from previous releases. Befitting its order of release, the 2017 Smith Ranch Cabernet seems to be the most backward of this vintage's offerings, but this is due to its structural youth and terroir-driven shape. With five or more years this wine will begin to show a beauty, perhaps more muscular than fruit-driven, that will continue to evolve over 20 years at least.

VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

The Cabernet block from which we harvested the fruit for this wine is an 11.1-acre Concannon Clone block of the Smith Ranch (total acreage is 154). Our first harvest from this site was in the 2002 vintage. The site is mostly loam but has cobble in various sections.

HARVEST DATA

October 16, 2017 | pH 3.81 | TA 0.60 | Alcohol 14.6%

FERMENTATION

Cold soaked for 5-7 days, individual fermenters inoculated with the D254, D-80, and D-21 yeast strains. Extended maceration of 14-18 days.

COOPERAGE

Aged for 24 months in mostly new French oak barrels. Primary cooperages were Le Grand, Taransaud, and François Frères.

CASES PRODUCED

112 cases

RELEASE DATE

September 17, 2020