Maisons Marques & Domaines

Dominus

Dominus Estate

Napanook

Napa Valley, California, United States
Vintage: 2020

Overview

Napanook is made solely from grapes grown at the historic Napanook Vineyard in Yountville, Napa Valley. The wine is blended from blocks in the vineyard that were carefully selected for their lively fruit, soft tannins and early maturing characteristics.

Winemaking

Enjoying a temperate climate, the vineyard's volcanic, well draining soils are specifically suited to growing Cabernet Sauvignon and the other Bordeaux varietals which compose the Dominus Estate wines. The soil is gravelly and clay loam. Meticulous efforts are made throughout the seasons to produce grapes of the highest quality for Dominus Estate wines.

During the winter season, precise cane pruning ensures ideal cluster spacing for optimal fruit ripening. Dry farming relies on a deep root system to take advantage of natural water sources from rain and underground supplies. Cluster thinning optimizes quality through yield regulation.

Rinsing the grapes 10 to 15 days before harvest removes dust and enhances the purity of the fruit. Hand-picking with small french shears instead of harvest knives minimizes bruising and vine damage. Small harvest baskets preserve the integrity of the clusters as they are transported to the winery. The sunny side of the vines is picked a few days before the shady side respecting perfect maturity.

Minimal intervention and restraint throughout the process of grape berry selection, fermentation and aging preserve the character of the fruit. The resulting wines convey the very personality of the vineyard. Dominus winemaking includes separate lot-by-lot fermentation. Cluster sorting by hand is complemented by an optical berry sorting system. Gentle pumping-over extracts aromas, color and tannins. Vertical wine press at low pressure delicately releases components from the skin. Racking barrel to barrel in 100% french oak removes sediment and assures clarification of the wine during aging.

Harvest Notes

The 2020 vintage was characterized by a dry winter and spring, with a total of 17" of rain (July 2019 to June 2020, historical average: 31"). February was warm and sunny with no rain (historical average is 6.6") and soils started to dry. The rains in March were insufficient (1.8" compared to an historical average of 4.8") to replenish the vine soil water reserves.

With limited soil water reserves and warm temperatures in the spring vines had limited shoot growth. Summer temperatures were constantly warm allowing a fast and homogeneous ripening. On August 13th, the growing season quickly took a turn with a series of two extreme heat waves. Selection was critical to remove berries impacted by the heat. In the night of August 16th to 17th, about 11,000 lightning strikes across northern California were recorded and sparked the LNU Lightning Complex fires. Until mid-September, there were several days with particularly dense smoke. Testing and microfermentations ensured that berries remained unaffected by smoke taint.

Harvest was completed before grapes could be affected by the Glass Fire which started on September 27th.

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

Varietals: 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Cabernet Franc, 5% Petit Verdot
New Oak: 20%