

Dominus

Upon his discovery of the 124-acre Napanook vineyard in 1981, Christian Moueix founded Dominus Estate to produce one of Napa Valley's most acclaimed cabernet sauvignons. The vineyard's volcanic, well-draining soils are specifically suited to growing Bordeaux varietals, and winemaker Tod Mostero vinifies each dry-farmed parcel separately. Attention to detail is unparalleled, with minimal intervention allowing the terroir to fully express itself in the wine.

Dominus Estate 2021

OVERVIEW

Dominus Estate is the Napa Valley property of Bordeaux producer Christian Moueix. The wine is bottled from the historic Napanook Vineyard. Located at the foothills of the Mayacamas, the vineyard was planted in 1838 and continues to evolve under the stewardship of Christian Moueix. The estate's Bordeaux varietals benefit from the Yountville microclimate where temperatures are moderated by cool breezes from the San Pablo Bay. The resulting wine is a uniquely refined expression of this special terroir.

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.

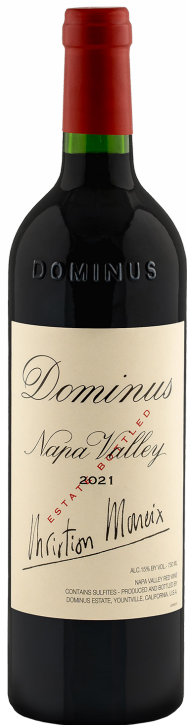
During the winter season, precise cane pruning ensures ideal cluster spacing for optimal fruit ripening. Dry farming relies on a deep root system to take advantage of natural water sources from rain and underground supplies. Cluster thinning optimizes quality through yield regulation.

Rinsing the grapes 10 to 15 days before harvest removes dust and enhances the purity of the fruit. 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.

VINTAGE NOTES

The vintage was characterized by a dry winter and spring, with a total of 14" of rain (July 2020 to June 2021, historical average: 31"). 2021 was the second consecutive year of a drought that started in January 2020. Temperatures were constantly warm over the growing season, moderately higher than the historical average and remained consistent throughout the ripening period. The weather conditions in 2021 favored an early hydric constraint which promoted production of small berries with high levels of phenolic compounds and deeply intense aromas.



VARIETALS

95% Cabernet Sauvignon
5% Cabernet Franc

ÉLEVAGE

40% new oak

100
POINTS

JEB DUNNUCK

One of the legendary Dominus, the 2021 Cabernet Sauvignon is unquestionably in the same league as the 2018, 2016, 2015, 2013, 2010, and 1991, and to my mind, wine simply doesn't get any better. Sporting a dense purple hue as well as an incredible perfume of blackcurrants, crushed stone, cedar pencil, smoke tobacco, and baking spices, its rich, full-bodied, and voluptuously textured, with ripe yet building tannins. It reminds me slightly of the 2010 (maybe the 2013), and I suspect it will have a similar evolution. Hide bottles for 7-8 years, and it will evolve gracefully for 30+ years. Hats off to the team of Christian Moueix and director Tod Mostero.

100
POINTS

The Wine Independent

The 2021 Dominus, 95% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc, is opaque purple-black in color. It needs a lot of coaxing to lure out scents of freshly crushed blackcurrants, blackberry preserves, stewed plums, and boysenberries giving way to subtle nuances of violets, licorice, and tar plus a touch of cedar in the background. The full-bodied palate is taut with densely laden, muscular black fruits framed by a firm grainy texture and well-played tension, finishing on a lingering ferrous note. A stunning vinous record of time and place, this is a 50-year+ Napa Cabernet to be experienced across generations. 3,700 cases were made.

99
POINTS

JAMES SUCKLING.COM

The purity of the cabernet fruit is so enticing, with blackcurrant, rose petals, nettles and subtle graphite. Touches of terra cotta and licorice. Full-bodied with super integrated tannins that are wonderfully polished, giving a cashmere texture that is really luxurious to taste at this early stage. It is quenching and so delicious already. 95% cabernet sauvignon and 5% cabernet franc. Needs three to four years to come around but already a joy to taste. Try after 2027.

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POINTS
VINOUS

The 2021 Dominus is a powerful, tightly-coiled wine that is holding back quite a bit of reserve. There's real depth and resonance waiting to emerge as the wine matures. Floral overtones and bright acids confer energy to a core of red/bluish fruits. Readers will find a Dominus built more on linear precision rather than opulence. It is hugely impressive in this tasting, with a long chalky finish.