

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.



Napanook 2021

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.

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
92% Cabernet Sauvignon
6% Cabernet Franc
2% Petit Verdot

ÉLEVAGE
18-20 months,
maximum 20% new oak

97
POINTS

JAMES SUCKLING.COM

This shows a lot of class, with aromas of blackcurrants, graphite, blueberries, dried flowers, black truffles and a touch of forest floor. The palate is medium- to full-bodied, with seamless tannins that goes on and on. Endless. Blackcurrants, dark mushrooms and violets with hints of fresh rose stems and light herbs. Velvety texture. A blend of 92% cabernet sauvignon, 6% cabernet franc and 2% petit verdot. Better after 2027.

95
POINTS

The Wine Independent

The 2021 Napanook is composed of 92% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Petit Verdot. Deep garnet-purple in color, it slowly emerges from the glass with expressive notes of blackcurrant pastilles, wild blueberries, and Morello cherries leading to an undercurrent of rosebud tea, cinnamon stick, and tilled soil with a waft of charcoal. The rich, concentrated, full-bodied palate delivers waves of black and blue fruit preserves supported by velvety tannins and well-knit freshness, finishing long and spicy. 3,000 cases were made.

95
POINTS

JEB DUNNICK

The 2021 Napanook is one heck of a Napanook, offering complex notes of currants, cassia, graphite, leafy tobacco, lead pencil, and chocolate. Incredible on the palate, its full-bodied and round, with supple, vibrant, incredible tannins. This is easily the finest vintage I've tasted of this cuvée and it's the equivalent of many a Grand Vin from other producers.

92-94
POINTS
VINOUS

The 2021 Napanook, tasted from barrel, is fabulous. Rich, deep and super-expressive, the 2021 captures all the best the vintage has to offer. A whole range of floral and savory overtones lend nuance. This vibrant, intensely mineral Cabernet Sauvignon is an absolute delight to taste today, and an especially fine edition of Napanook, endowed with big fruit and equally potent tannins.

