

Margins 'Santa Clara Valley Mourvedre' 2020

Producer - Megan Bell

Provenance: Santa Clara Valley, California

Farming: Low spray conventional, converting to organics in 2020 - one accidental use of non-organic fungicide used.

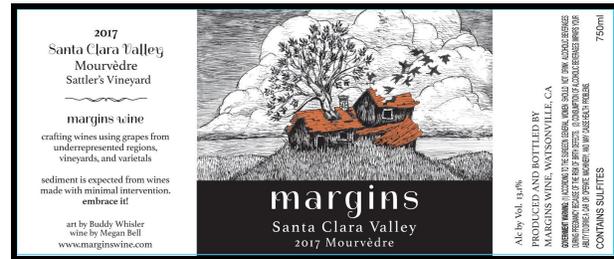
Grape(s): 100% Mourvedre

Vineyard: Sattler Vineyard is 2.7 acres, planted in 2009 in a very cold area where grapes struggle to ripen. Alluvial soils with loam and sand.

Vintage: In 2020, Megan doubled her production, moved to a new winery and was forced to evacuate her home due to wildfires just after the first pick. The growing season also presented challenges with heatwaves and a powdery mildew pressure across the Santa Cruz Mountains, she was obliged to pick earlier and find ways to manage alkalinity.

Fermentation/ Aging: destemmed and fermented in macro bins with one punch down per day. Pressed after about 10 weeks as the ferment goes dry into neutral barrel for 9 months aging on gross lees.

Sulfite: 20 ppm a week before bottling



The Producer:

“Complicated things don’t really interest me,” Megan muses “I want wine to be thought of as something that’s very not complicated - that’s something that affected me a lot at the beginning.” Megan’s interest in wine grew out of high-school brewing experiments to studies at UC Davis. From the beginning she found the pall of mystery that hung over wine to be discouraging and totally unnecessary. Her project, initially funded through a crowdsourcing campaign, is dedicated to the less evangelized regions of California and their scrappy mom ‘n pop vineyards. The wines are delicious, totally unfussy and super clean.

The Vineyard:

Sattler Vineyard is a dainty 2.7 acre backyard vineyard nestled between the foothills of the Santa Clara Valley. “Almost all of the vineyards I work with are mom and pop” she says. Planted in 2009, the Mourvedre here struggles to ripen because of intense diurnal shift thanks to the nearby ocean so the fruit is picked at a lean 20 brix. Flat and typified by alluvial soils with loam and sand, the site is relatively easy to care for and will be converting to organic farming with the outset of the 2020 season. “We’re on this organic journey together,” Megan tells us. The owners have recently purchased an

in-row cultivator, an expensive piece of weed management equipment that allows them to keep the vegetation in check and do without herbicides.

In 2020 the vineyard was sprayed with a non-organic fungicide because the owners didn't realize the particular product wasn't organic.

2020 was an especially challenging year for Megan. She moved into a new winery space with a friend which brought with it the joys of permitting and licensing paperwork, and doubled her production from 1,000 cases to 2,000 cases without hiring additional help. 'I didn't quite realize how much that was going to be for one person' she told us. To further complicate matters the neighborhood where she lives was evacuated due to wildfires after the very first pick. With 27 tons left to pick and process, Megan was living in a friend's guest room while managing a new workflow in a new space.

The Winery:

Megan makes her wine in a shared facility with three other winemakers in a little town called Aromas in southern Santa Cruz county. She doesn't like green character in wine and given a natural leaning towards a brambly character in most of the fruit she works with, she does not ferment anything whole cluster. The reds are essentially made the same way with alterations made when logistics demand: destemmed fruit is fermented in polyethylene macro bin. "I found a style and I'm sticking to it!" she says with enthusiasm. During fermentation she uses a metal tool for gentle, daily punchdowns. "I'm literally punching each section of the cap once," she says "not mixing it up, not trying to introduce air. Very very gentle maceration, to get as little extraction as possible." Macerations typically last the duration of the ferment (around two weeks) and base wines are pressed into neutral barrels for lees aging. After 9 months aging, base wines are racked into tank with an addition of 20 ppm sulfite and bottled a week after without fining or filtration. The 2019 bottling includes about 10% Counoise from the same vineyard; she had a barrel of Mourvedre that wasn't quite full and a little extra Counoise so she blended!

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