

Lo-Fi 'Mencia' 2021

Producer: Mike Roth and Craig Winchester

Provenance: Santa Maria Valley, Santa Barbara, California

Grape: 85% Mencia, 15% Arinto

Vineyard: Old vineyard down the road from the winery. A 1.5 acre parcel of vines planted in the 90's was rebudded to Arinto and Mencia 2017 making '21 the second bearing year. Cool growing area on former riverbed with a mix of sandy loam and Chemise shaley loam.

Vintage: 2021 saw a cold, wet spring with bud break coming later than normal. Cool weather persisted with a heat spike at the end and less rain than normal.

Fermentation/ Aging: Destemmed Mencia and Arinto were co-fermented in layers in a large format, steel tank with mechanical cap irrigation for 20-30 minutes a day. Pressed at dryness, settled overnight and racked to 228L neutral French oak barriques for 6 months aging.

Filtration: none.

Sulfite: 25 ppm added at bottling.



The Producer:

Like many in the emerging scene of fresh-focused Cali wineries, Mike Roth and Craig Winchester favor a scientifically thorough approach without falling for the trickery of interventionist winemaking. Native yeast, natural malolactic conversion, minimal effective sulfur and bottling without filtration are the pillars of the Lo-Fi ethos. Over the last few years they've seen the public resonate with their vision and the business has grown to an impressive 7,000 cases in a year. Some of their fruit comes from vineyards they farm and some is purchased. They don't believe in dogmatic natural wine purism and they're not fans of science project indulgences with high price tags. The cool-kid treehouse thing doesn't do it for 'em. They just want to jam out high-quality, wholesome wines that people can always look forward to hanging out with; Lo-Fi wines relentlessly deliver on quality and affordability. The winery employs a charming record store motif to drive home the message that the wines aren't supposed to be aristocratic studies, just a good time in a bottle.

The Sourcing

The Mencia and Arinto come from a 1.5 acre parcel attached to one of the Riverbench Vineyard, oldest vineyards in the Santa Maria Valley located just down the road from the winery. Though parts of the vineyard were planted as far back as the 1970's, the 4 rows of Mencia and Arinto were planted in the 90's and then rebudded in 2016-2017.

The rebudding project was initiated by Alexander Russan, a sherry importer turned winemaker under the now defunct Metrick label. Mike had been essentially making the wine on Alex's behalf in 2020 and in 2021 took over the parcel since Alex changed careers. The vineyard is part of a wide flood plane with really deep, water retentive soils composed of Chemise shaley loam and sandy loam. Mike considers the cool temperature to be the main terroir feature pointing to the valley's success with growing strawberries.

Although no herbicides are used, the farming is not organic. It is, however, SIP certified, an organization that includes in its assessment details like worker wages and healthcare, water use and energy efficiency.

The Cellar

85% Mencia and 15% Arinto were picked concurrently, destemmed and loaded into a large steel tank in alternating layers. During fermentation a mechanical cap irrigator is run once a day for 20-30 minutes to keep the cap moist without extracting too much from the skins. Once fermentation has finished, the wine is pressed, settled overnight and racked to 228L neutral French oak barriques for 6 months aging. The wine is racked to blend shortly before bottling with an addition of 25ppm sulfite. No fining or filtration.

For more details email info@OlmsteadWine.com

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