

## **Populis 'Wabi Sabi Red' 2018**

**Producer** - Diego Roig & Shaunt Oungouliau - Les Lunes/  
Populis

**Provenance:** Northern California

**Farming:** organic

**Grape(s):** 55% Carignane, 25% Syrah, 20% Zinfandel

**Vineyard(s):** Carignane and Zinfandel from Venturi vineyard  
in Mendocino and Syrah from Poor Vineyard

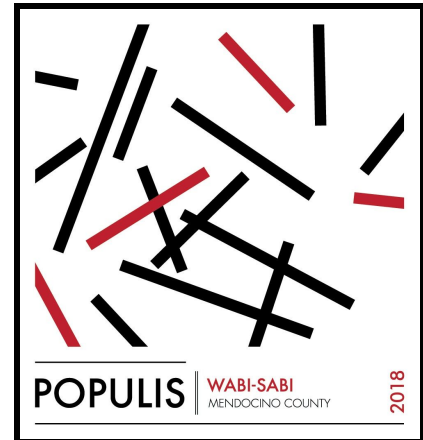
**Vintage:** 2018 was a long, cool vintage with harvest taking  
place 2-3 weeks later than normal resulting in lower alcohol,  
high acid wines with great ripeness to balance. Really prolific  
vintage for Carignane allowing Diego and Shaunt to  
experiment more freely.

**Fermentation:** The Carignane is vinified three ways (whole cluster, destemmed and a modified  
version of carbonic maceration), Syrah is directly whole-cluster pressed (rose) and the Zinfandel  
is destemmed. Pressed at dryness and settled for a day or two and racked away from gross  
lees for aging. Aging in a mixture of flextank and neutral barrel (5-7 years old) until the spring

**Fining/ Filtration:** none.

**Sulfite:** added at blending in the spring a month before bottling

**Misc:** 'Wabi Sabi' is a zen philosophy rooted around the beauty of piecemeal imperfection  
mostly associated with a highly distinctive pottery style.



### **The Producer:**

Grape magicians Diego Roig and Shaunt Oungouliau represent a middle way between highly sophisticated cellar craft and unmussed vitality. Their ambition is to produce transportive wines, drawing well-deep scientific comprehension and experience in the service of preserving that which is most special about a particular place and season.

They make about 4,000 cases of wine across their two labels: the more stately Les Lunes wines of bygone American flair and the democratized Populis wines.

Representing about 2/3rds of their total production, Populis is their label dedicated to easy drinking and affordability.

### **The Vineyard**

The Carignane and Zinfandel come from Venturi Vineyard in Mendocino spanning 40 acres steeped in the history of Italo-American migration in the tumultuous time between the World Wars. Larry, a mentor to Diego and Shaunt, started growing grapes as a side hustle with his wife shortly after they were married in the 1960's. Their weekend passion grew until they decided to go full-time, buying the vineyard planted by his grandfather. The vineyard was formed by alluvial flows leaving fist sized stones and is

typified by deep gravelly loam soils with shale, quartz and sandstone. Low pH and good drainage with low organic matter.

In the 1950's, the family's heirloom vineyard was cut in two by the creation of highway 101. On the east side the Sauvignon Blanc grows alongside Grenache Noir, Sangiovese and Merlot growing in deep Pinole Gravelly Loam offering an ideal balance of drainage and water retention. Perfect for organic viticulture without irrigation. The fruit for this wine is sourced from two adjacent blocks. One is minimally higher elevation on more of a slope and tends to ripen a little sooner. The two parcels are nevertheless harvested simultaneously specifically to get a mix of slightly underripe and slightly overripe fruit to add depth to the wine. Mostly East facing which helps to mitigate the sun allowing Diego and Shaunt to make the kinds of lower ABV wines they favor.

The Syrah is farmed at Arnold block, a historic vineyard in Hopland owned by the Arnold family who are members of the Hopland Band of the Pomo Nation. Sandwiched between a few parcels at Poor Ranch, the vines were planted in the 1940's and the Poor family have been helping with the farming ever since. This is one of the last vineyards owned by an indigenous group. Deep, well-drained soils of Pinole gravelly loam are perfect for dry farming. The site lends itself to long lived wines.

### **The Cellar**

Aiming to produce a crunchy, bistro style wine from the odds and ends, 'Wabi Sabi' red is a bit of a Franken-Wine. 2018 produced incredible amounts of Carignane with yields up by as much as 50% in some places so Diego and Shaunt were able to indulge their curiosities. Three different methods were applied to the Carignane. The first portion is whole cluster, foot-crushed and fermented in flextank. The second lot is destemmed using a very gentle Jura-inspired frame they built that they attach to the top of the fermentor and rub the bunches over it resulting in a tank of destemmed but largely unbroken grapes. The third is processed using a riff on carbonic maceration developed for use in flextanks they learned from talking to Evan Lewandowski.

In 2017 they started approaching the Syrah for 'Wabi Sabi' differently. Shaunt mentions that Syrah can be a challenging grape 'cause it really hangs onto its varietal characteristic and marks the wine too much.' In an effort to both keep the wine fresher and avoid Syrah's voice from overpowering the others, they now process the Syrah as rose. Whole clusters are roughly pressed, the juice is settled over night and then fermented in flex tank and barrel. The Zinfandel is destemmed in the same Jura-inspired fashion as the Carignane.

The most common issue they run into in their cellar is reduction so the base wines are all settled and racked away from gross lees for aging. The base wines were primarily aged in flex tank with the exception of the whole cluster Carignane that could stand up to barrel aging. The blending was done in the spring. No fining, no filtration, modest sulfite addition.

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