

Lo-Fi 'Coquelicot Cabernet Franc' 2019

Producer: Mike Roth and Craig Winchester

Provenance: Santa Barbara, California

Grape(s): 100% Cabernet Franc

Vineyard: Coquelicot vineyard is a large scale organic vineyard typified by the classic gravelly, sandy soils of Santa Barbara

Vintage: 2019 was a marginally better year than 2018 in terms of rainfall but Mike points out that Santa Barbara has a remarkably even growing season from year to year.

Fermentation/ Aging: 16-18 days modified carbonic maceration, pressed into 228 L neutral French oak barrel for aging. Racked twice before bottling.

Sulfite: 25 ppm total, added at racking and bottling.

Filtration: none.



The Producer:

A big 'ol grey post-brutalist rectangle may not seem like the incubator for Lo-Fi's delightfully thirst quenching beauties but California is a strange place after all. 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. They embrace a Loire tinted view of California sun with an emphasis on whole-cluster ferments as they strive for clean, flirty wines that amp you up!

The Sourcing

Coquelicot is a larger scale, organic vineyard located in Los Olivos in the Santa Ynez Valley. The Coquelicot vineyards are planted at lower density in Positas series fine, sandy loam over clay and gravel. Positas series soils are alluvial in nature and tend to be deep and well-drained. The vines of Cabernet Franc that were planted here are an old unknown clone. The vines are very high yielding (9 tons/ acre), fertilized with chicken manure and compost. The clusters produced are huge and hand picked in the first week of November just above 20 brix. Coquelicot is located in the cold air drain for the valley making spring frosts a real challenge. In order to account for this, these vines are pruned in late winter in order to delay flowering past the critical frost window.

2019 was a marginally better year than 2018 in terms of rainfall but Mike points out that Santa Barbara has a remarkably even growing season from year to year. "We're

blessed in a certain way and cursed in a certain way,” he says highlighting the fact that while the ideal environment helps them create the level of consistency they hope to offer customers, there is a little less year to year excitement.

The Cellar

The whole clusters are loaded into 1000 gallon steel tanks and Nomblot conical concrete tank and blanketed in CO₂. As alcoholic and enzymatic (carbonic) fermentation occurs, juice is freed and pools at the bottom of the tank. Once a day during the 14 day maceration, this accumulated juice is siphoned out and pumped back over without cracking the tank all the way. After the pump over the tank is gassed again with CO₂. This essentially the same method employed to produce the basic, Santa Barbera County Cabernet Franc but they pull the juice less.

After 16-18 days, the wine passes through vertical, perforated press into tank for settling before transfer into 228L French oak barriques where it rests for 9 months. The wine is racked for the first time in February at which point the first addition of sulfur is made. A second racking occurs shortly before bottling in the spring at which point a second addition of sulfur will be made if the wine has a higher ph.

The concrete tanks are from a winery Mike used to work for that received a batch of cracked tanks. Using an epoxying method designed for sealing concrete water tanks, Mike was able to make the tanks water tight again. He’s been interested in working with concrete for a long time but the cost was prohibitive until this unexpected situation presented itself.

For more details email info@OlmsteadWine.com

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