

Lo-Fi 'Malbec' 2018

Producer: Mike Roth and Craig Winchester

Provenance: Santa Barbara, California

Grape(s): 100% Malbec

Vineyard:

50% - Coquelicot vineyard is a large scale organic vineyard with Positas series alluvial soils of fine sandy loam

50% - Saint Ynez Vineyard is a 100 acre vineyard planted 4-5 years ago

Vintage: Mike points out that Santa Barbara has a remarkably even growing season from year to year.

Fermentation/ Aging: 16-18 days maceration in steel with daily food treading, 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 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.

The other 50% of the grapes are from Saint Ynez vineyard, a 100 acre vineyard planted 4-5 years ago by some folks from the tech industry. The owners don't make any wine themselves, this is purely a grape growing operation. The vineyard has been nearly

organic since the start with the only exception being the choice of fertilizer but they have been moving towards abandoning that as well.

Mike points out that Santa Barbera 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 excitement around vintage variation.

The Cellar

The whole clusters of Malbec are loaded into a 1.5 ton, 48 x 48 stainless steel tank from a local artisan that goes by the charming moniker ‘Stainless Steve.’ The clusters are tread down once a day until the wine reaches dryness.

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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