



CHATEAU MONTELENA WINERY

2010 NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON WINEMAKER'S NOTES

The wines here at Chateau Montelena are often described as having classic “old-world” structure with ripe California fruit, and it is in years like 2010 that this really shines through. What that means is that these wines tend to have more acid, lower pH, and more moderate alcohol levels as compared to some of the flashy “modern” Cabs. This classic chemistry allows them to pair very well with a wide variety of dishes and sets them up for graceful aging. The beauty of our style is that you get all the wonderful ripe flavors that California is known for, but with much more expression of place, and without all the noise and distraction of high alcohols and overwhelming new oak flavors.

This growing season was defined by the long cool summer that led to slow, almost methodical ripening. The only exception was a brief but intense heat wave in the third week of August that caught a lot of growers with their proverbial pants down – they had opened up their canopies and ended up with lots of sunburn – but not us. Four decades of experience have taught us to trust our vineyards, and once again they didn't disappoint. Essentially all the blocks of our Napa Cabernet came in with beautifully balanced chemistries, full maturity, and lower sugars – perfect for our style of wine.

This wine shows deep dense plum color with great density. The nose opens with anise and spice before moving into rich layers of blackberry and cherry compote. All that great concentrated fruit is beautifully complemented with barrel tones of vanilla and clove. It is quite youthful and lively on the palate with a good firm acid core – great for food pairing – and abundant velvety tannin. Complex layers of black fruits through the mid palate, with good barrel spice underlayment throughout, are nicely complemented by bright red fruit on the finish. This wine is quite approachable so young, but it will definitely improve with additional time in the bottle, if you've got the patience. If you do plan to drink it now (through the end of '13), I'd recommend decanting it in order to help it open up even more.

Cameron Parry, Winemaker

Harvest dates Oct. 1 thru Nov. 4
Blend 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Merlot
2% Cabernet Franc
Barrel Aging 14 months
French and Eastern European, 12% New
Bottling Date April 2012
Release date January 2013