

ANCIENT PEAKS WINERY

2011 MERLOT

MARGARITA VINEYARD | PASO ROBLES, CALIFORNIA



OVERVIEW

We proudly include Merlot in our small family of wines as a varietal that excels at our estate Margarita Vineyard. Here, ancient sea bed soils combine with a long growing season to yield a Merlot with silky fruity flavors and luscious texture. We blend fruit from different Merlot blocks that exhibit a range of distinct qualities, bringing added natural complexity and dimension to the finished wine.

VINEYARD

The 2011 Merlot comes from three blocks at Margarita Vineyard, specifically blocks 4, 5 and 7. These blocks are situated along the slopes of an uplifted ancient sea bed, where the well-drained, calcium-rich soils are distinguished by decomposing oyster fossils. Block 7 yields dark, intensely flavored fruit with both softness and power. Block 4 produces lighter red fruit qualities with lively acidity, while Block 5 splits the difference with a blend of black and red fruit characteristics. Together, these blocks converge to create a Merlot with natural depth and nuance. Margarita Vineyard stands alone as the southernmost vineyard in the Paso Robles AVA, nestled into the rugged Santa Lucia Mountain Range just 14 miles from the Pacific Ocean. The mountains tower over the property's western flank as testaments to the tectonic forces that blessed Margarita Vineyard with a rare diversity of soils. The peaks also act as a gateway between the cool marine air to the south and warm inland conditions to the north. This phenomenon creates one of the coolest growing environments in the Paso Robles region, resulting in fruit of uncommon depth and structure.

WINEMAKING

Our aim is to produce a pure expression of the Merlot varietal with a round, velvety structure that speaks to Margarita Vineyard. After destemming, the lots were cold soaked for 48 up to 72 hours prior to fermentation for a gentle extraction of initial color and flavor. The wine was then fermented in stainless steel tanks with a blend of wild and commercial yeasts. After fermentation, the lots were aged for 17 months in a combination of French (60%) and American oak (40%) barrels, 25 percent of which featured new oak.

TASTING NOTES

The 2011 Merlot offers warm, toasty aromas of plum and dried cherry with notes of leather and cinnamon spice. A juicy texture unfolds with layered flavors of black cherry, blueberry and cassis, with trailing accents of black olive and mocha. Fine acidity adds structure to a smooth, balanced finish.

CUISINE PAIRING

The juicy flavors and inherent structure of the 2011 Merlot promise versatility with cuisine. Recommended pairings include pork tenderloin, roasted lamb shoulder, crispy duck breast and grilled steak with olive and herb sauce.

VINEYARD:

Margarita Vineyard

VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

Merlot 100%

HARVEST DATES:

October 24 (Block 4)

November 1 (Block 5)

November 9 (Block 7)

AGING REGIMEN:

17 months in French and American oak barrels

FINAL ANALYSIS:

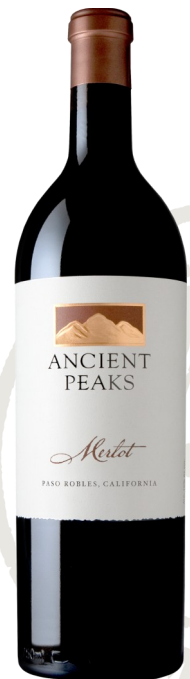
Alcohol: 14.5%

TA: .72

pH: 3.32

CASES PRODUCED:

3,999



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