

ANCIENT PEAKS WINERY

2010 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 and reliable coastal breezes guide the grapes to optimal maturity with true varietal character. The result is a wine that captures the essence of Merlot, with silky fruit flavors and a luscious texture.

VINEYARD

The 2010 Merlot comes primarily from Block 7 at Margarita Vineyard, with contributions from neighboring Block 4 and Block 5. These three blocks unfold along the slopes of an uplifted ancient sea bed, where the well-drained, calcium-rich soils are distinguished by decomposing oyster fossils. Such soils yield small, intensely flavored grapes with fine texture and firm natural acidity. The blocks are also planted to two Merlot clones for enhanced complexity, specifically Clone 03 and Clone 181. 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, 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

After destemming, the must was cold soaked for 48 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. The wild yeasts brought complexity and mid-palate richness to the wine, while the commercial yeasts fostered the vivid natural fruit quality. After fermentation, the lots were aged for 15 months in a combination of French (60%) and American oak (40%) barrels, 30 percent of which featured new oak. Small lots of Malbec and Zinfandel from Margarita Vineyard were incorporated into the final blend. The Zinfandel contributed textural depth, while the Malbec added a bright fruit component.

TASTING NOTES

The 2010 Merlot opens with rich red fruit aromas with accents of tobacco, black olive and spicy oak. Smooth, polished flavors of plum, cassis and black cherry unfold with notes of cedar and cinnamon. Supple tannins embrace an elegantly balanced finish.

CUISINE PAIRING

The complex flavors and velvety texture of the 2010 Merlot are a fine match for braised lamb shanks, rosemary pork tenderloin, grilled duck breast and beef medallions in red wine sauce.

VINEYARD:

Margarita Vineyard (100%)

VARIETAL

COMPOSITION:

Merlot (86%)

Malbec (7%)

Zinfandel (7%)

HARVEST DATE:

October 5 (Merlot)

October 13 (Merlot)

October 28 (Malbec)

October 28 (Zinfandel)

AGING REGIMEN:

15 months in French and American oak barrels

FINAL ANALYSIS:

Alcohol: 14.5%

TA: .71

pH: 3.33

CASES PRODUCED:

3,024

