

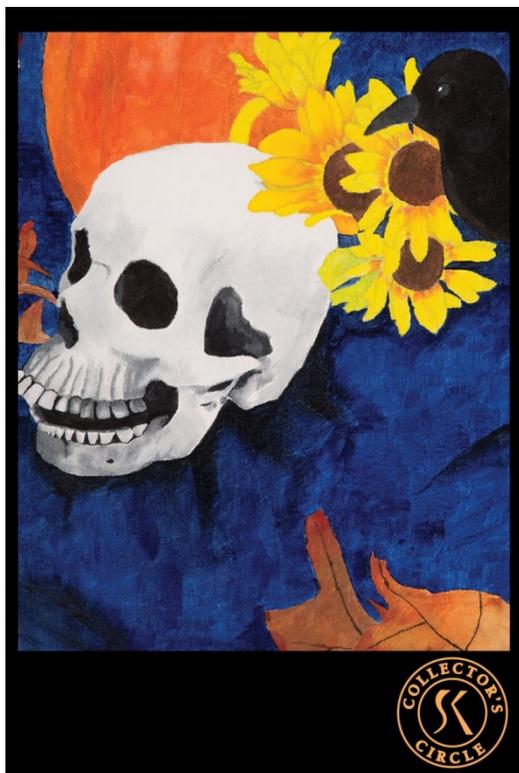


THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

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“NEVERMORE” RED BLEND LIVERMORE VALLEY



ARTIST

Melissa Stroud was a student in the Public Art and Design Academy at Liberty High School in Brentwood when she painted *Nevermore* for her Advanced Art class. Inspired by her recent study of Edgar Allan Poe in English class and tasked with creating an autumn themed still life, Melissa combined sunflowers, a raven, and a skull to depict the transition between summer and fall. *Nevermore* was painted on canvas with acrylic paint. In addition to working with acrylics, Melissa enjoys watercolor, oil pastel, graphite pencil, and ceramics. She is currently obsessed with gardening and growing flowers and succulents.

HARVEST NOTES

2013 & 2014 were as ideal years to farm wine grapes as I have seen in the Livermore Valley in nearly 20 years. Clement weather from budbreak to harvest and no precipitation in August and October produced some of the highest yields California has ever seen. More importantly, the quality of fruit was uniform and extraordinarily high. The lack of rainfall in 2013 (only 4.50 inches compared to 14.66 in 2012) did have its negative consequences, however. Lowering water tables caused an increased concentration of dissolved minerals that raised soil pH levels and led to the early senescence of canopy and the concomitant lowering of fruit ripeness levels in certain blocks.

WINEMAKER NOTES

On occasion, when we find the resulting blends to be of particularly fine quality, we will put together barrels from more than one vintage into a non-vintage offering for our club members. Most of the famous Champagne houses create a “house style” of their wines by continually blending several vintages together to create a flavor profile that is consistently “Moet” or “Bollinger,” for example. Blending of multiple vintages is also done routinely in Port and in Jerez where the great Spanish Sherries are made. Multi-vintage blending has been slow to catch on with still wine producers, and with this *Nevermore*, a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Malbec from the 2013 and 2014 vintages, the style of the wine was more important to us than was the expression of the vintage.

TASTING NOTES

Nevermore, featuring original artwork from Melissa Stroud, is a blend of 50% Merlot, 33% Cabernet Franc, and 17% Malbec from Ghielmetti Estate Vineyard various in the eastern foothills of the Livermore Valley. The Collector’s Circle has always been filled with wines that were meant for early drinking, substantial up-front fruit, and an ability to pair easily with all different kinds of cuisine. *Nevermore* is a perfect example of our Collector’s Circle “mission.” The combination of Merlot, with its fleshiness, Malbec with its exotic organoleptics, and Cabernet Franc contributing a sexy raciness to the blend, creates a wonderfully rich and complex nose with layers of black and red fruit, and subtle barrel spice pepper. The entry of *Nevermore* mirrors its nose in the richness of dark to black fruit. Though not a particularly tannic wine, there is plenty of acid-based structure from mid-palate to finish. The acidity that informs this offering’s structure is the same that carries the depth of flavors here to a very long finish; the flavors linger long after the wine has been swallowed. While the flavors of all the varieties can be distinguished, this wine is showing lovely integration of fruit now. This integration will continue over the next 2-4 years in bottle. As forward fruit consistently describes wines made for members of this wine club, *Nevermore*, should be drunk over the next 24-30 months to get the most from this fruit-laden offering.

VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

All the fruit for this wine came from the Ghielmetti Estate Vineyard located in the shadow of the Altamont Pass in the eastern foothills of the Livermore Valley.

HARVEST DATA

October 2013 & 2014 | pH 3.65 | TA .68 | Alcohol 14.7%

FERMENTATION

After destemming and crushing, the fruit was fermented in 1¾ ton open-topped fermenters. The wine was pressed off skins after about 10 days.

COOPERAGE

6 barrels: 50% new French, and 50% second-use and neutral for 22 months.

CASES PRODUCED

139 cases

RELEASE DATE

July 8, 2017