



THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

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# THE PREMIER CABERNET SAUVIGNON — 2015

## LIVERMORE VALLEY



### VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

100% Cabernet Sauvignon: 40% Smith Ranch Vineyard (clone 8); 40% Home Ranch Vineyard (clone 7), and 20% Sachau Vineyard. These three sites comprise the breadth of our appellation from the eastern foothills to the quarry-dotted western edge, creating a 14-mile axis of world-class quality cutting through the heart of Livermore Valley wine country.

### HARVEST DATA

October 1-7, 2015 | pH 3.60 | TA 0.61 | Alcohol 14.1%

### FERMENTATION

Cold soaked for 5-7 days, individual fermenters inoculated with the D254 and D-21, and D-80 yeast strains. Extended maceration of 14-21 days.

### COOPERAGE

Aged for 24 months in mostly new French oak barrels. Primary cooperages were Le Grand, Taransaud, and François Frères.

### CASES PRODUCED

241 six-packs

### RELEASE DATE

May 19, 2018

### HARVEST NOTES

Despite the absence of rain at harvest and yet another year of drought conditions during the heart of the growing season, the 2015 vintage will be characterized by an hour's worth of hard rain in May that badly damaged blooming flowers on the vine and devastated yields across the State. Early ripening varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc were spared the greatest losses — the most heavily affected were the red Bordeaux varieties — and overall Ghilmetti Estate Vineyard produced only 69% of average. When yields are down, quality tends to rise, and 2015 was no exception. The quality of all of the Cabernet family of grapes was uniformly excellent, and we achieved desired ripeness at relatively low sugar levels. Grenache, Sauvignon Blanc, and Semillon also reached beautiful levels of maturity in the vineyard and have contributed to beautiful wines.

### WINEMAKER NOTES

The Premier Cabernet Sauvignon represents the finest assemblage of Cabernet in the vintage from the vineyards sites we farm and with which we work. While the wine is always 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, the final blend is a careful consideration of quality and balance regardless of site and clone and differs vintage to vintage depending upon the magic and vagaries of the vintage. The Livermore Valley has a long and glorious history; though, far less time highlighting what, in my mind, it grows as well as any region in the world: the Cabernet family of grapes. The Premier — since its inception in 2009 — is our effort to show just how magnificent this grape can be when the vineyards are farmed meticulously and when a certain winemaking philosophy that embodies balance and pace and freshness of fruit is brought to bear. In 2015 we harvested Cabernet from three vineyards and eventually sorted through more than 100 barrels of wine to pick the final 5: each of which was magnificent on its own, and more importantly, even better as part of a blend. Each lot of wine was fermented separately in 1.7 ton open-top fermenters, went through a period of extended maceration that was appropriate for the site and the year, barreled down separately, then blended and rebarreled about a year before release. Interestingly enough, even as we are prizing more and more the nuances of used wood, most of the barrels that were chosen for this offering were new. 100% French oak is used; the wine was aged about 24 months before bottling.

### TASTING NOTES

The Premier 2015, like its previous incarnations, is a wine of its year...from the first nosing. Showing predominantly dark fruit, with noticeable fresh bay and dried sage, this wine has impressive complexity of aroma. On entry, the wine is leaner and more austere than the 2014 vintage (the Cabernets of this vintage never achieved the plushness of the vintages surrounding it) with beautiful acid-driven pace from entry through the mid-palate. Though it's not as rich as some vintages, the 2015 is showing, even in its youth, an evolution toward fullness and balance that are two important hallmarks of great wine. From the standpoint of flavor, the 2014 offering has darker fruit in the mouth than in the nose, significant fruit and an underlying savory herbal note that adds tremendous complexity to the wine. On the finish, the wine broadens and becomes more generous in mouthfeel than it shows in the mid. Like all other vintages of the Premier, this wine shows the varied vineyards from which it was made with a deftness and structure that will reward medium to long-term aging. This wine should age gracefully for more than 10 years, and we believe it to showcase a vision for Cabernet Sauvignon that is in keeping with the world-class potential of the Livermore Valley.