



THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

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2016 “MERRILLIE” CHARDONNAY MISSION RANCH | ARROYO SECO

HARVEST NOTES

The 2016 vintage started life, for the first time in several years; with significant winter rainfall (Livermore saw rainfall in January 2016 exceed that of January 2015 by 243%). Helping to recharge aquifers and wells, rainfall was also helpful in leaching out some of the dissolved solids that had accumulated during the drought. Budbreak and Bloom occurred in temperate weather, and the season continued in a fairly typical Livermore Valley fashion: dry and warm through to harvest. The trend of significantly earlier harvests stopped in 2016 as we picked our first fruit one day later than the previous year. 2016 was a uniformly excellent year for fruit quality and yield. I believe this vintage will rival 2014 in excellence.

WINEMAKER NOTES

The 2016 Merrillie greatly accelerates the evolution of our Chardonnay-making philosophy. We prefer Chardonnays that accentuate lithe-ness and acidity; fruit and pace over richness, sur lie textures and “buttery” aromas. With this wine, we fermented in both mostly neutral barrel and puncheon (500 liters vs. 225 of barrique) in order to lessen the effect of wood on the wine. Most of the fermentation was accomplished with native yeast strains while a third was inoculated...this measure increased organoleptic complexity, and we stopped malo-lactic fermentation early so as to maintain some of the crisp “green-apple” acidity that gives the wine such wonderful pace and “alive-ness.” Four sub-lots of wine were eventually blended, rebarreled for a short time, then bottled after about 10 months in 30% new French oak.

TASTING NOTES

A blend of four sub-lots (1 native yeast in barrel, 1 in puncheon; 1 fermented with CY-3079 in barrel and 1 in puncheon), this new release of Chardonnay is as close as we come so far in creating a style of wine that is ethereal, yet dense with flavor; lithe in structure and capable of accenting a world of different cuisines. Hailing from Arroyo Seco’s Mission Ranch Vineyard (the first Mirassou planting in this appellation in 1961), the 2016 Merrillie is replete with the lush aromas of citrus curd, tropical fruit notes, and the complexing reductive notes of struck flint and matchstick. These pure fruit notes are expressed as flavors on a rich but elegant entry then explode on a long and swiftly paced mid-palate. On the finish, the wine shows focused acidity and a lingering and rich structure. Each lot was wonderfully individualistic, differing in flavor, aroma, and texture. Together, they created a wine of finesse and elegance.

VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

100% Robert Young clone of Chardonnay from the Mission Ranch vineyard in the Arroyo Seco appellation.



MERRILLIE

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C H A R D O N N A Y
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HARVEST DATA

September 2016 | pH 3.34 | TA .67 | Alcohol 14.2%

FERMENTATION

The wine went through 50% malo-lactic fermentation.

COOPERAGE

Approximately 30% new French oak barrels were used for fermentation and aging. Doreau, Damy, and François Frères were favored coopers. The wine spent about 10 months in barrel.

CASES PRODUCED

439 cases

RELEASE DATE

May 23, 2019