



CHATEAU MONTELENA
ESTABLISHED 1882

2021 Potter Valley Riesling

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton

INTRODUCTION

This vintage was the perfect opportunity to explore not just the nuances of Riesling but the manifold dimensions of this expressive variety. In general, the climate in Potter Valley imparts a consistency and stability of flavor to fruit in the vineyard, with significant variation emanating from early autumn rain or in the case of 2021, prolonged drought. It's in these vintages that the basic character of the fruit is substantively changed; not detrimentally, but fundamentally different. For the Montelena winemaking team, this is a rare challenge that tests our technical acumen and a rare opportunity that rewards curiosity and creativity. It's also a vital reminder to guard against overgeneralizing regions and seasons: not all Napa Valley Chardonnay tastes the same, just as not all Clare Valley Riesling should be lumped into a single category. It's in this vein that the 2021 Montelena Riesling stands on its own. In a warm, dry year, when "conventional" wisdom would predict excessive ripeness, plentiful residual sugar, and shallow acidity, instead there is balance, finesse, and freshness. It's both amazing and humbling that after fifty years of producing this wine, we can still be surprised and awestruck.

VINTAGE WEATHER

The growing season began warm and straddled the fine line between seasonal and hot temperatures through spring and summer in Potter Valley. The drought manifested early stress in the old Riesling vines and accelerated ripening heading into the fall. From there it was a question of balance as flavor slowly caught up to sugar and acid levels.

NOSE

Floral and spicy, the intensity here is quite impressive. The ripeness of the vintage is immediately apparent as star jasmine, honeysuckle and fresh apricot are bolstered by cinnamon and clove. The fresh flowers eventually yield to dried peach and mango as the aromas turn tropical with a subtle hint of beeswax.

PALATE

The spice is more subdued on the palate, uncovering a latent suppleness and viscosity, further enhanced by stonefruit as well as ripe, Honeycrisp apple. It's a beautiful balance that is polished and punctuated by a firm band of acidity transitioning to juicy pear.

FINISH

There's a soft, roundness on the finish that pulls in all of the minerality of the wine but layers in baked apple and just a touch of lemon rind. The pear is still present but this time as a complement to more tropical notes of lychee and fresh pineapple.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES

October 4

ALCOHOL

13.4%

BLEND

100% Riesling

BARREL AGING

6 months in French oak
and stainless steel

BOTTLING DATE

March 2022

WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton