



CHATEAU MONTELENA
ESTABLISHED 1882

2018 Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton

INTRODUCTION

We believe our sense of stewardship along with a healthy, long-term perspective have been essential to Montelena's success over the past 50 years. The Estate Vineyard, situated adjacent to the Chateau at the base of Mount St. Helena, profoundly embodies that outlook. From the beginning, the focus has been on farming the right way, instead of the convenient way. The right way takes time. The right way demands continuous investment. The right way encourages learning, adaptation and improvement. Most importantly, while the right way is always an option, it's rarely the most convenient one for many wineries. But decades of careful attention, good decision-making, and a focus on vineyard health have aligned what's best for the soil, best for the wine, and yes, best for this family farm. Even though the right way isn't always the most expedient way, it's the only option we consider. This is Montelena at its best.

VINTAGE WEATHER

What's not to like about the weather in 2018? The late spring rains in March and April were very productive and the vines responded with plentiful growth into summer. Unusually low nighttime temperatures coupled with warm to hot days magnified the acidity in the fruit, creating elegant structure for extending aging, rather than overtly jammy flavor. Harvest was slow and methodical as subtle variations in soil and sun exposure magnified the typically nuanced differences in ripening and maturation.

NOSE

Fresh and lively, the wine opens effusively with raspberry, mint and plum sauce. The baking spices soon follow, leaning clove initially but with plenty of cedar and vanilla. Still subtle, the ripe fruit elements, mostly cassis and fig at this stage, lurk beneath the surface along with beautiful hints of graphite and toasted sage, awaiting additional time in glass.

PALATE

Still very tightly wound, it's the texture and mouthfeel that drive the palate initially. The tannins in particular are somewhat coarse but not so angular to overshadow the abundant dark fruit. The dynamic tension on the midpalate serves to focus and magnify the layers of black cherry, cocoa powder, and black pepper, before turning slightly earthy and dusty. The structure is pronounced, but still harmonious and well defined.

FINISH

It's in the transition to the finish that the acidity materializes in almost candy-like fashion, a beautiful contrast to the supple tannins. Here the wine's density shines elegantly, well balanced between smoky, espresso bean and delicate, dried blackberry. It's the latter that defines the finish at this moment, persistent in length and depth.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES

September 20 – October 25

ALCOHOL

14.2%

BLEND

98% Cabernet Sauvignon
1.5% Petit Verdot
0.5% Cabernet Franc

BARREL AGING

22 months in 100% French oak,
40% new

BOTTLING DATE

August 2020

WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton