



CHATEAU MONTELENA  
ESTABLISHED 1882

## 2019 Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

### Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton

#### INTRODUCTION

Farming requires optimism. That's especially true in viticulture, given the timeline to transition bare ground into a finished wine. At a minimum it takes three years from gently hand-planting each individual vine to the first harvest. However, that initial crop is quite small and it will be another two to three years before the vines really hit their stride. After harvest, fruit destined for the Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon will spend an additional two years in barrel before bottle aging in our cellar prior to release. At best, it's six solid years of farming, winemaking and cellaring before we can pull that first cork. That type of commitment requires a fundamental belief in ourselves, our work and our mission. We have to believe that going the extra mile, pushing a little harder and accounting for every small detail is not only worth it, but will be appreciated years from now. Moreover, we have to be curious, creative and daring for the future of each wine and the land we steward. In short, we have to believe that the future will be better and we cherish our small contribution.

#### VINTAGE WEATHER

Late spring rains and abundant sunshine spurred significant vine growth—meaning big canopies, big clusters and big berries. The vines soaked up the Calistoga warmth through August and as expected, yields were high as harvest began. Patience is even more important in years such as 2019 since flavor, color and texture tend to take longer to develop. Consequently, the level of precision in deciding what to harvest and when to do so drives quality and wine potential even more than normal. Accordingly, harvest proceeded in fits and starts as we chased balance, finesse and concentration in the vineyard through September and into October.

#### NOSE

There is so much perfume in this wine: fresh flowers and lavender are bolstered by ripe plum, sandalwood and cherry compote. There's also an incredibly appealing note of Earl Grey or bergamot that lifts the entire aromatic profile. Linger behind the fruit is where the action starts as black pepper, vanilla, crushed rock and soy are revealed with patience.

#### PALATE

The bright, zesty acidity of the vintage is immediately apparent as the fruit on the palate leans toward raspberry and cranberry, at least initially. They're followed by a rush of chalky, angular tannins that at first frame the acidity, but then serve to mellow it. Here, the fruit turns dark once again; but this time it expresses as blueberry jam and ripe blackberry before ushering in more savory notes of cedar and mint that are very characteristic of Montelena Cabernet. There is no doubt that this is a young wine that will need a few years of cellaring before coming into balance. That said, the freshness and purity of the vineyard character are very enticing, even at this stage.

#### FINISH

As the palate softens, the finish begets more structure, present as espresso bean and cacao initially, but baking spices and a subtle sweetness after a few moments. The contrast between the soft fruit and texture is one of the amazing characteristics of this wine, which should continue to increase in depth and complexity over time.

### Technical Information

#### HARVEST DATES

September 17 – October 15

#### ALCOHOL

14.1%

#### BLEND

99% Cabernet Sauvignon  
0.5% Petit Verdot  
0.5% Cabernet Franc

#### BARREL AGING

22 months in 100% French oak,  
40% new

#### BOTTLING DATE

August 2021

#### WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton