



CHATEAU MONTELENA WINERY
ESTABLISHED 1882

2012 Calistoga Petite Sirah

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton, May 2017

INTRODUCTION

We love Petite Sirah here at Chateau Montelena. And we're not alone. Analogous to its more widely-recognized blending partner, Zinfandel, Petite Sirah actually has its own advocacy group – PS I Love You. While we won't wade into the merits or necessity for promotion of this somewhat obscure variety, the reality is that for those in the know, Petite Sirah can truly be a diamond in the rough from some of California's best producers. Rich, velvety, dense, and – at Montelena at least – ageable, the wines are typically an excellent value. Our dry-farmed Petite Sirah comes from 100 year old vines on the south-west side of Calistoga. As is the case in the vineyard, where ignoring the temptation for over-ripeness is paramount, in the cellar, we grapple with the seemingly ubiquitous tendency to over-extract, and instead aim for balance, structure, and nuance, the cornerstones of great wine.

VINTAGE WEATHER

Summertime temperatures were pleasantly warm by mid-afternoon, with just a little bit of chill each morning from the fog that sneaks in from northern Knights Valley. That marine layer gives the vines a chance to ease into the day and helps preserve the acidity that remains a hallmark of this wine, especially in the dry-farmed vineyards. It's rare to get incredible flavor development and high yields in the same year, but 2012 was definitely a bumper crop and we couldn't have been more pleased with the power, elegance, and nuance in the fruit we harvested. The key word here is 'balance' – both in the vines and in the wines.

NOSE

Get ready for an endless parade of red and dark fruit as the wine opens with blackberry, strawberry jam, and dried fig in quick succession. These yield quickly to softer notes of cocoa and anise which become more pronounced with time in the glass.

PALATE

The acidity and tannins of this wine are an immediate one-two punch but are complemented by undertones of dried plum, allspice, and hazelnut, all wrapped in a finely-knit texture that will need time to open up.

FINISH

There's a hint of Earl Grey tea on the finish as the mouthfeel transitions from somewhat coarse and angular to smooth and viscous. The black pepper notes are unmistakable as are the hints of cedar and cloves.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES

September 27th, 2012

ALCOHOL

14.2%

BLEND

98% Petite Sirah
2% Syrah

BARREL AGING

22 months, 100% French Oak

BOTTLING DATE

August 15, 2014

RELEASE DATE

May 2017

WINEMAKER

Matt Crafton