

LITTLE ENGINE

W I N E S

2016 GOLD MERLOT



Production: 140 cases
Alcohol: 14.9%

VITICULTURE NOTES

The 2016 season started very early with unusually warm April weather. Budbreak was about the 2nd week of April and we had vigorous vine growth through June. Canopy management was key to ensure air flow and give adequate bunch exposure where required and minimizing the need to spray. September and October warmed up and were mostly dry, allowing grapes to extend their ripening time on the vine.

The fruit for this wine was sourced primarily from our estate vineyard and small parcels from select growers. Harvest dates were early to mid-October, based on flavour and tannin ripeness in the vineyard. At about 3 tonnes per acre, crop yields were kept quite low for Merlot standards. This was to concentrate the fruit.

WINEMAKING NOTES

Hand harvested and sorted in the vineyard, the Merlot grapes are de-stemmed into one-tonne fermenters ensuring a high proportion of whole berries. After 6-7 days of cold soak, the musts are gradually warmed up to initiate a natural or directed fermentation. Hand plunging is used to keep the cap moist and ensure colour and tannin extraction. The fermentation temperatures are maintained cool early in ferment and then elevated to aid in phenolic extraction. The total maceration time is about three weeks. The wines are drained and pressed off just before dryness and tank settled prior to going to barrel.

Our Merlot prefers 100% French oak. It undergoes spontaneous malolactic fermentation and matures in barrel for 16 months with no racking until pre-bottle blending. The 2016 Gold Merlot is 58% new oak and the balance in 2nd and 3rd fill barrels. Unfiltered prior to bottling.

TASTING NOTES & SUGGESTED CELLARING

A luscious and bold wine. Initial notes of pink peppercorns and tobacco lead to a rich and layered mouthfeel. On the palate, the robust structure offers ripe concentrated notes of wild blackberries and dried figs mingle harmoniously with cigar box and cloves.

Supremely balanced upon release though under ideal cellaring conditions, can age to 2028 as it's well structured.