

LITTLE ENGINE

W I N E S

2019 SILVER MERLOT



Production: 500 cases
Alcohol: 13.3%
pH: 3.50

VITICULTURE NOTES

After a cold February with ample snow, most of March and early April was warm with above average temperatures. Budbreak for Estate Vineyards was during the third week of April. May continued to be warm with temperatures reaching 30 degrees C. This gave us rapid shoot growth.

After flowering at the beginning of June, the weather cooled off and gave us higher than normal precipitation. Warm August temperatures encouraged an early veraison.

September brought more rain than usual and cooler temperatures which delayed ripening for some varieties. Canopy management was crucial throughout the season to create airflow through the vines and amongst the clusters as humidity was a recurring issue. October 10 brought a severe cold snap and shut down all the vines across the Okanagan. Our fruit was unaffected by this as the lower cropping levels meant we had reached ripeness by this point.

The fruit is predominantly from our own estate vineyards and select Naramata Bench and Oliver growers. Harvest dates were early to mid-October, based on flavour and tannin ripeness in the vineyard. Bunches are exposed early in the growing season to aid in phenolic development. Crop yields were kept at an average of 3.5 tons per acre; low for Merlot standards. This was done to concentrate the fruit.

WINEMAKING NOTES

Hand harvested and de-stemmed into one ton fermenters to encourage a high percentage of whole berries. After a few days of cold soaking, 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 3 weeks. The wines are drained and pressed off just before dryness and tank settled prior to going to barrel. Our Merlot undergoes spontaneous malolactic fermentation and matures in French Oak barrels (10% new) for 15 months.

TASTING NOTES & SUGGESTED CELLARING

A deep, rich, fuchsia and garnet colour, this wine opens with layers of black cherry, blackberry, baking spice and sandalwood. A well-structured, plush palate showcases ripe black cherries and currants, with allspice and approachable tannins that carry into a lengthy finish.

While easily indulged upon release, this wine will develop well through 2026 under ideal cellaring conditions.

CULINARY INSPIRATION

Grilled lamb chops with rosemary fig chutney and port jus