

TOR

N A P A V A L L E Y

MELANSON VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2017

VINEYARD This Pritchard Hill area is one of Napa Valley's great sites for big-boned, dense, very complex Cabernet Sauvignons. Greg Melanson's vineyard is very steep with rows running up and down the hill directly across from the Colgin winery and vineyard. Its rocky face looks down at Napa Valley's floor. Like many of the best sites on Pritchard Hill, its higher elevation and afternoon breezes coming from the Pacific cool the vineyard in the warm afternoons. Ideal real estate for world-class Cabernet. The mountain site is rugged, its Sobrante loam soil studded with volcanic rock. At an average elevation of 1,200 feet, the vineyard sits above the fog line and benefits from maximum sun exposure all day.

WINEMAKING Beneficial vine maturity and a lot of hard work in the vineyard over the past few years have resulted in a 2017 Melanson that showcases more of the minerality of this Pritchard Hill site, complementing the power, richness and dark blue fruits that this property has always given us. To complement this fruit profile, we selected 100% Taransaud French cooperage for Melanson this year. We consider this potentially the most age-worthy Melanson so far with its firm mid-core of fruit, its drinking window will be very broad since its tannins are so refined.

WINEMAKER'S TASTING NOTES Melanson's dark fruits saturate the palate, which is to us a hallmark of great Pritchard Hill Cabernets. This is one of the wines of the vintage for Matt. Profound nose of black fruits, figs, walnuts, violets licorice and exotic spices, great minerality, with huge mountain density and structure and a magnificent, sumptuous core, freshly crushed blackberries, chocolate-covered cherries, cassis and aniseed with compelling nuances of black tea, cigar box, truffles and charcuterie, plus, with coaxing, gentle wafts of red roses and crushed rocks emerge. The medium to full-bodied palate is simply arresting, offering a myriad of floral and earth sparks amidst a black fruit core and with seamless, firm, very fine-grained tannins. Well-knit freshness brings forth layer after layer of delicate nuances on the very long, mineral-laced finish.

VINTAGE It will be one of those vintages that will be discussed for decades to come. The wines we made are beautiful, our highest-scoring Chardonnays to-date as well as Cabernets and Proprietary Reds that are reflective of great vintages, with early barrel scores into potential 100-point range. Our reds have excellent extract; layered, downright sexy wines that have the structure to live a long time. I taste the wines and marvel. It was a very wet spring, over 30 inches of rain in January and February alone. Spring bloom and set went smoothly and we rolled into the summer with heat spikes in July, late August, and early September. By early October all the Chardonnays were in and the Cabernets were reaching optimum maturity. We dropped a lot of fruit in 2017, a cluster per shoot in To Kalon, and in part because of this, we had all our fruit in by mid-October. Then came the fire, which had no influence on our wines, but changed all our lives. The wines themselves are rays of sunlight when I reflect on 2017.

96-98 Points - *International Wine Report*

CASES PRODUCED: 295

RETAIL BOTTLE PRICE: \$225

