

IDLEWILD

2022 Flora & Fauna Red Wine, North Coast

Vineyard

Flora and Fauna loosely means the collection of plant and animal life of a certain epoch. In my version, it is the collection of varietals from the cellar that make up the blend for the year. The 2022 is based in Barbera that is blended with Dolcetto, Freisa, Nebbiolo, and Grignolino to achieve the balance desired from this Piedmontese inspired blend. The fruit comes from Fox Hill Vineyard, Lost Hills Ranch, and Rancho Coda. Fox Hill lends depth, Lost Hills balances with vibrancy and bright aromatics, and Rancho Coda gives a core of fresh fruit and spice. In the end, Mendocino is on display with high and low tones and a very pleasant rusticity while Russian River Valley fills in the gaps to make the wine cohesive.

Vintage

2022 started slow and a bit wet with Spring rains, which were a blessing to offset the drought from the previous years enough to get us safely through the growing season. The summer months were mild even. Then, a large heat spike hit for a week just as the vintage began. If we hadn't had the wet start to the season (or the work over years to increase soil organic matter and overall health), this could have been disastrous. But, the vines prevailed and did beautifully. The effect seen in the wines is either a decided delicate nature if picked early to prevent over-ripening in the heat or a brooding density if the wines hung on through the heat.

Winemaking

All of these varieties have structure and at the same time a joyous side. The focus in fermentation was to build enough structure for a very versatile food wine but also to emphasize the exuberant and delicious elements of each grape. To do this, the wines were left largely whole cluster and all fermentations started with carbonic maceration. That being said, none of them were pushed to be fully carbonic wines. Instead, the initial lift in aromatics and push on frothy fresh fruits was achieved, and then I fully treading the wines to allow fermentation to switch to a more standard flow. This gave a backbone and savory qualities to act as bass notes to the carbonic high tones. All of the wines were pressed a touch early to ensure that the tannic structure was appropriate for a shorter time in barrel, just four months in neutral oak.

Wine

In Italy, the house wine is often light, fresh, and firmly structured so as to pair beautifully next to a wide range of foods, and that is the inspiration for this blend. The 2022 is both deep and savory while also being light and fresh. Dark cherry, iron and sanguine notes, warm spices, dried herbs, violets, and graphite are highlights of the aromas. The mouth feel is a joyful interplay of brightness with chewy bass notes before the seriousness kicks in with a firm acid and tannin balance on the finish.

12.9% alc by vol.