

Las Jaras Wines

2017 OLD VINES CARIGNAN

Mendocino County

"This wine is bright and dark, dense and light, tight and supple all at once. For so much chaos, there is incredible cohesion and that is what I love about Carignan. It is a bit of an explosion of flavor and it is all held together by freshness. This wine will be an incredible ager or when young give it a quick decant."

– Joel Burt, winemaker

General thoughts on Carignan: Carignan is such an intriguing variety for us. At its best it is juicy, brambly and spicy. At its worst it is tannic, sour, and tastes like cabbage. It can also be quite difficult to grow. They are generally vigorous old vines that stand 7-8 feet tall. The vine is extremely prone to powdery mildew infection, so it needs meticulous canopy management to avoid disaster. Site selection is important for this variety to perform. It needs to be on benchland, with properly draining sandy loam soils and a hot climate. The light soils help regulate the vine's vigor and the heat helps respire acid, which can be absolutely searing on this variety.

Vineyards: 100% Carignan sourced from Gary Venturi's vineyard in the Calpella area of Mendocino County near Ukiah on the benchlands to the west of the valley. Gary and his dog, Kelsey, tend the vines. They were planted in the mid-1960's. The vineyard is dry farmed and sustainable. The soils are Yokayo series sandy loam. When dry it is like walking on the moon. The vineyard is super clean due to Gary's fastidious suckering and canopy management. I think it's also due to being on the right soil for Carignan. It only needs 1-2 sulfur dustings per season.

Winemaking: We hand-picked the vineyard at 23 brix. Gary has a few vines of Golden Chasellas growing on the property so we asked to have them added to the pick. When the grapes arrived at the winery, we tipped half of the bins into the open top fermentor as whole clusters and we destemmed the rest. We added no SO₂ and kept the tank jacket set a 72°F. We were very gentle when handling this variety because it can be really tannic especially with such concentrated fruit. We used only light punchdowns, just wetting the cap. We did one punchdown per day until the native fermentation kicked off and then increased the punchdowns to two per day. After the mid-point of fermentation, we backed off to one or no punchdowns. Once the tank was dry, we drained it overnight and pressed the skins and intact clusters in the morning using a tank press. We aged the free drain and the press separately in 228 liter Burgundian barrels; none of them were new. We aged the wine in a cool room where they underwent native malo-lactic fermentation. We racked the barrels about a month before bottling and then back to clean barrels. We racked again a few days before bottling and the wine was limpid. This is our method of creating wines that are clean without being filtered. We bottled unfiltered and unfined.

Production: 238 Cases

Alc: 13.71%

TA: 6.74 g/L

pH: 3.52

VA: 0.66 g/L

RS: 0.52 g/L

Total SO₂: 56 ppm

Dissolved CO₂ at bottling: 860 ppm

Turbidity at bottling: 15 NTU