

Las Jaras Wines

2018 OLD VINES CARIGNAN

Mendocino County

Here at Las Jaras, we've always been so intrigued by Carignan. It's a misunderstood variety that often gets planted where it doesn't belong. But when it's treated right – site selection is essential, as Carignan needs to be planted on benchland with properly draining loam soils and a warm climate to help it respire acid – Carignan is a thing of beauty: juicy, brambly, and spicy.

Our 2018 Mendocino County Carignan opens up with a nose of savory earth, boysenberry pie, blueberry, and stone. The palate is medium weight and full of boysenberry bramble, mineral notes, and soft, melted tannin. The finish is long and refined. This wine is proof that Carignan is capable of producing elegant wines, especially after a long, cool, growing season like 2018. We changed up our winemaking this year to offer a softer expression than in previous vintages. This makes it a beautiful pairing for all sorts of food: Mediterranean fare, burgers, pizza, and more.

Vineyards: This is a single-vineyard wine, the grapes coming from the Lee Testa Vineyard in the Calpella area of Mendocino County, near Ukiah. The vineyard is on the benchlands to the west of the valley, and is farmed by Gary Venturi, who owns the vineyard next door. These old vines were planted in the mid-1960s. The vineyard is undergoing organic conversion, and is currently dry-farmed and grown without the use of synthetic chemicals. The soils are Yokayo series sandy loam and when they are dry, it is like walking on the moon. Due to Gary's fastidious suckering and canopy management, this is an incredibly clean vineyard, and gets only one or two sulfur dustings per season.



Winemaking: We had a very cool growing season, so our grapes got plenty of hangtime before we picked them at 22 brix. Gary has a few vines of golden chasselas growing in an adjacent block, so we have him add them in with the pick every vintage. When the hand-picked grapes arrived at the winery, we sorted and destemmed them. No sulfur was added and we kept the tank jacket set a 72°F. We were very gentle when handling the grapes, because this variety can be really tannic, especially with concentrated fruit. Only light punchdowns, which basically just wet the cap. We performed one punchdown a day until the native fermentation kicked off and then did two punchdowns a day once it was going. 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. The free drain and the press wines were aged separately in 228-liter Burgundian barrels and 600-liter demi muids; none of them were new. The wines were aged in a cool room where the wines underwent native malolactic fermentation. We racked the barrels about a month before bottling and then back to clean barrels. The wines were racked a second time a few days before bottling, when the wine was limpid. This is our method of creating clean wines that don't require fining or filtration.

Production: 306 cases | ABV: 12.7% | TA: 6.1 g/L | pH: 3.43 | VA: 0.54 g/L | DCO2: 715ppm
Total SO2: 39ppm | RS: 0.81 g/L | Turbidity at bottling: 24 NTU

