



RIVERBENCH



2018 PINOT MEUNIER

Estate Grown & Bottled – Santa Maria Valley

COMPOSITION	100% Pinot Meunier, Méthode Champenoise
HARVEST	August 17, 2018
TIRAGE	July 25, 2019
DOSAGE	None
ACIDITY	0.93 g/100ml
PH	3.12
ALCOHOL	12%
PRODUCTION	51 cases
PRICE	\$68

WINEMAKERS NOTES

Every once in a while, something comes along that disrupts the routine and brings a feeling of unexpected bliss. A stranger in line at the market tells you a funny joke. A barista passes you your coffee, free of charge. A friend unexpectedly shares her bounty of organic lemons. In 2014, we at Riverbench decided to fully invest in developing our grower sparkling wine program by planting Pinot Meunier. This rare grape is famous in Champagne, France, but has yet to make itself known in California; we are, in fact, the first to grow it for sparkling wine here in Santa Barbara County. We jumped in with both feet and took a chance, and this Pinot Meunier sparkling wine is lighting up our world. The grape itself has quite a backbone, forming a sparkling wine with structure and complexity. Bright citrus and ripe blackberry plays softly in the background behind a pretty puff of pillowy yeastiness and a touch of cream. Some might get an exciting and unique note of rye on the finish. Either way, this bottling stands for something that puts a smile on your face.

2018 HARVEST

The 2018 vintage returned us to our historical average for bud break and rainfall, followed by a short but significant frost season. We saw some of the lowest winter temperatures in years and had nearly two weeks of sprinklers running to protect the young shoot growth. The cool weather elongated the flowering season and resulted in variable ripening and berry uniformity across varieties and clones. Classically, "May Grey" led to "June Gloom" and though there were many complaints from the locals, our winemaker, Clarissa Nagy, was happy for the return of our marine layer. Cool days and even cooler nights allowed for moderate respiration during the day and minimal to no respiration at night. Translation: high acids and great ageability. Our first grapes for sparkling were harvested the latter half of August and first of September, which felt late in comparison to the past three years. The oddity this year was a very cool September and October, which greatly extended the season to get the final grapes ripe. The overall result was higher-than-expected yields with fruit of exceptional quality. The combination is rare and was well received. Color, concentration and phenolic ripeness were at a maximum. The intense aromas and flavors from 2018 will make this vintage one to lay down for years to come.

