



RIVERBENCH



2019 PINOT MEUNIER

Estate Grown & Bottled, Santa Maria Valley

COMPOSITION	100% Pinot Meunier, Methode Champenoise
HARVEST	September 2, 2019
TIRAGE	November 21, 2020
DISGORGEMENT	October 2022
ABV	12.5%
ACIDITY	0.73 g/100mL
PH	3.04
PRODUCTION	150 cases
PRICE	\$68

WINEMAKER'S 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.

2019 HARVEST

The old mantra of "slow and steady" reverberated across the 2019 vintage which started with abundant winter precipitation followed by a classically cool summer. The rains we received over winter were 5" above normal, priming our vines for an auspicious budburst in mid-March. Warm spring temperatures accelerated rapid flowering and therefore consistent fruit set, the like of which we had not seen in years. Unusual May showers gave our vineyard crew a formidable challenge of thwarting powdery mildew and botrytis on the vines. We are happy to say they rose to the occasion and kept our fruit some of the cleanest in years despite the late rain and foggy summer to follow. The first grapes for our sparkling wine, the Pinot Meunier, came into the winery on the first of September, a little later than usual. The rest of our still wine grapes followed suit and by the start of October, 95% of the ranch was harvested. The Pinot Noir clones exhibited dark color and rich extraction from the lower-than-expected yields. The real star of 2019 however, was our 15 acres of old vine Chardonnay. The clusters verged on perfection with clean, balanced, concentrated fruit. The cool growing season showcased primary notes of granny smith apple and riverbank minerality that will continue to develop in bottle "slow and steady" long into the future.

