



RIVERBENCH



2021 PINOT MEUNIER NOUVEAU

Estate Grown & Bottled, Santa Maria Valley

COMPOSITION	100% Pinot Meunier
HARVEST	October 5, 2021
COOPERAGE	100% Neutral French Oak
COOPERS	Remond, Boutes, Francois Frères
ACIDITY	T.A. 0.57 g/100mL
PH	3.49
ABV	11.8%
BOTTLED	December 2021
PRODUCTION	185 cases
PRICE	\$36

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Wine doesn't have to be so serious. We believe some of the best wines are more approachable than aggressive, more play than pomp. In Beaujolais, winemakers traditionally celebrate a new vintage with a carbonic-style "nouveau" — a fresh and fruity wine bottled only weeks after harvest and meant to be enjoyed young. Our Pinot Meunier Nouveau pays homage to easy-going, early-release wines while laying new ground for this lesser-known grape varietal in Santa Barbara County.

So, what is it like? Imagine a California spread of fresh fruits served on a silk tablecloth. Farmers market strawberries, ripe mission figs, and watermelon sprinkled with fleur de sel intersperse with pops of jamaica water and pomegranate souffle. Crisp acidity drives this wine's freshness, but silky tannins carry the signature of Santa Maria's sandalwood and cinnamon spice, adding depth to the palate. You may even catch a touch of earthy sweetness, like a whiff of fresh organic potting soil. It's the kind of wine that begs for a hot summer day, served chilled (and often) in good company. It is seriously playful, as the best wines are.

2021 HARVEST

The 2021 season started with a historically normal bud-break following only 6" of winter rain, 8" under our average. Only a few frost alarms in the Spring and no damage from frost. The cool spring weather and noticeably higher cluster counts led to an extended bloom and berry set period. Vine indicators like bloom, berry set, and veraison were tracking 2 weeks later than average, and as the fruit continued to ripen, the season extended to 4 weeks later than average years. The benefit of the temperate days and cool nights was slow and well-rounded berry uniformity and ripeness. As we began harvesting, we saw our yields were coming in 20-25% higher than expected and this was the reason for the extended time needed to ripen the fruit. In the winery, we usually kick off the vintage with our Pinot Meunier for sparkling, but this year we started with still wines — a full 6 weeks behind the historical average. Wente Chardonnay were the first of the grapes to come in on September 17th, One Palm Pinot Noir on September 30th, and Sparkling Pinot Meunier on September 23rd. Fermentations were slow and steady for Pinot Noirs with malolactic finishing in late winter due to the colder winter months. Chardonnay came in mid-October, was pressed, racked and went to barrel. Primary fermentation was cool and long, just like we prefer in a cool vintage. A few lots "went to sleep for the winter" as the French like to say. They began to wake up in spring and finished primary and secondary fermentation. Acids are bright and crisp with flavor profiles highlighting the dark fruits for Pinot Noirs and citrus fruits for Chardonnays.

