

VARIETAL COLLECTION

Merlot

BY CALDWELL

2022

Vintage:	Ninth
Composition:	97% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc
Clone:	1, 3, 181, and 595
Appellation:	Coombsville, Napa Valley, CA
Vineyard:	Caldwell Vineyard Estate, Established 1981
Vineyard Blocks:	Caldwell Block 3, 14 and 17
Yield:	3.0 Tons per Acre on Average
Average Vine Age:	30 Years
Grape Varieties:	See Composition Section
Rootstock:	3309 and 5C
Harvest Date:	Multiple

Vintage Summary: Coming off yet another drought year in 2021, 2022 started early and was warm to hot throughout the vintage. Whites kicked off with Sauvignon Blanc in August, but Chardonnay took its time ripening, as we had an excellent crop. The window between whites and reds was nonexistent, with Malbec coming to the winery only 2 days after Chardonnay. Since the heat provided plenty of ripeness, reds kept rolling in despite the rain and we didn't finish harvest of the old vines in Block 11 until October 27th. One of the most unique vintages in history, 2022 really was two harvests: one before the long, triple-digit week in September, and one after the rains in late September. Luckily Coombsville only hit 105F, whereas up valley some regions hit 120F for days in a row, devastating the crops. The extreme weather pattern variation was incredibly site specific, and only the terroirs best able to withstand the heat will deliver incredible wines.

Fermentation Vessel:	Stainless Steel
Yeast:	Multiple
ML Bacteria:	Multiple
Wood Origin:	French Oak (Jupilles, Bercé)
Ageing:	100% French Oak, 70% New, for 20 Months
Fining:	None
Filtering:	None
Alcohol:	14.9%
Bottled on:	July 25, 2024

Winemaker's Tasting Notes: I said this last year, but I'll say it again: "It is not every year that we make a Varietal Collection Merlot." It just seems that the old vines and young vines are singing so well together. What one brings to the table, the other compliments – very yin and yang. With the heat in 2022, however, the Block 17 clone 181, which appears to handle itself better in warmer years, was the star. Aromatics are more on the red spectrum, with high levels of terpenes and freshly cut violets. The new block of Cabernet Franc at the colder bottom of the property provides some spice and levity to the nose. The palate follows a similarly red array of flavors, with a finish of vanilla from the lightly toasted new French oak. The Merlot in Block 17 provides the most freshness of any 2022 in the entire Caldwell lineup, which will allow this wine to age for several years to come.

Optimal Drinking Period: Now – 10 Years

Production:	122 Cases
Price:	\$175 / 750ml

