

Dominus

Upon his discovery of the 124-acre Napanook vineyard in 1981, Christian Moueix founded Dominus Estate to produce one of Napa Valley's most acclaimed cabernet sauvignons. The vineyard's volcanic, well-draining soils are specifically suited to growing Bordeaux varietals, and winemaker Tod Mostero vinifies each dry-farmed parcel separately. Attention to detail is unparalleled, with minimal intervention allowing the terroir to fully express itself in the wine.

Dominus Estate 2020

OVERVIEW

Dominus Estate is the Napa Valley property of Bordeaux producer Christian Moueix. The wine is bottled from the historic Napanook Vineyard. Located at the foothills of the Mayacamas, the vineyard was planted in 1838 and continues to evolve under the stewardship of Christian Moueix. The estate's Bordeaux varietals benefit from the Yountville microclimate where temperatures are moderated by cool breezes from the San Pablo Bay. The resulting wine is a uniquely refined expression of this special terroir.

WINEMAKING

Enjoying a temperate climate, the vineyard's volcanic, well draining soils are specifically suited to growing Cabernet Sauvignon and the other Bordeaux varietals which compose the Dominus Estate wines. The soil is gravelly and clay loam. Meticulous efforts are made throughout the seasons to produce grapes of the highest quality for Dominus Estate wines.

During the winter season, precise cane pruning ensures ideal cluster spacing for optimal fruit ripening. Dry farming relies on a deep root system to take advantage of natural water sources from rain and underground supplies. Cluster thinning optimizes quality through yield regulation.

Rinsing the grapes 10 to 15 days before harvest removes dust and enhances the purity of the fruit. The sunny side of the vines is picked a few days before the shady side respecting perfect maturity.

Minimal intervention and restraint throughout the process of grape berry selection, fermentation and aging preserve the character of the fruit. The resulting wines convey the very personality of the vineyard. Dominus winemaking includes separate lot-by-lot fermentation. Cluster sorting by hand is complemented by an optical berry sorting system. Gentle pumping-over extracts aromas, color and tannins. Vertical wine press at low pressure delicately releases components from the skin. Racking barrel to barrel in 100% french oak removes sediment and assures clarification of the wine during aging.

VINTAGE NOTES

The 2020 vintage was characterized by a dry winter and spring, with a total of 17" of rain (July 2019 to June 2020, historical average: 31"). February was warm and sunny with no rain (historical average is 6.6") and soils started to dry. The rains in March were insufficient (1.8" compared to an historical average of 4.8") to replenish the vine soil water reserves.

With limited soil water reserves and warm temperatures in the spring vines had limited shoot growth. Summer temperatures were constantly warm allowing a fast and homogeneous ripening. On August 13th, the growing season quickly took a turn with a series of two extreme heat waves. Selection was critical to remove berries impacted by the heat. In the night of August 16th to 17th, about 11,000 lightning strikes across northern California were recorded and sparked the LNU Lightning Complex fires. Until mid-September, there were several days with particularly dense smoke. Testing and microfermentations ensured that berries remained unaffected by smoke taint.

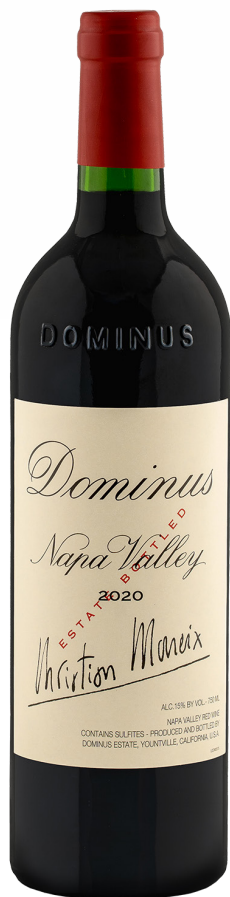
Harvest was completed before grapes could be affected by the Glass Fire which started on September 27th.

98
POINTS
JAMES SUCKLING.COM

Aromas of blackcurrants, black cherries, hints of graphite, wet earth, and lavender. Sandalwood. Full-bodied with an impressive and refined structure that runs deep and vertical in the wine. Chewy. Hints of chocolate and hazelnut at the end. Needs five or six years to soften.

96
POINTS
The Wine Independent

A blend of 95% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Cabernet Franc, the 2020 Dominus has a deep garnet-purple color. It rolls out of the glass with expressive notes of baked blackberries, preserved plums, and kirsch, with suggestions of Indian spices, sandalwood, potpourri, and black truffles, plus a ferrous hint. The full-bodied palate delivers a firm, grainy texture with just enough freshness to support the generous fruit, finishing long and oh-so-spicy. Yum!



VARIETALS

95% Cabernet Sauvignon
5% Cabernet Franc

ÉLEVAGE

40% new oak



MAISON FONDÉE EN 1858

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