

2021 LINDEN VINEYARDS CLARET

STYLE

The 2021 Claret shows pungent aromas of red currants and red raspberries, along with fresh thyme, mint and tarragon. Maybe a bit of roasted red pepper in the background. The wine is medium bodied. There is a perky and lively finish with a refreshing acidity.

FOOD PAIRINGS

Coq au Vin, grilled salmon, simple pasta with grated cheese, classic tian from Provence.

VINEYARDS

Hardscrabble Vineyard (75%) on top of the Blue Ridge at 1,300 to 1,400 feet with an eastern to southern slope. Well-drained mineral soils give good tannin structure. Vines planted in the early 2000s. VSP training systems and high density spacing.

Boisseau Vineyard (15%) is located on a bluff above Front Royal in the Shenandoah Valley at an elevation of 600 feet. The vineyard is west facing on light, deep, well drained loam soils. The vines were planted in 2000 and are trained on cordon/VSP trellising. Contributes mid palate volume and fruit.

Avenius Vineyard (10%) is just 1 mile north of Linden Vineyards at 1,300 feet contributes acidity and verve. Vines planted in 1998 and 1999.

VINTAGE

Spring came in gently and predictably. A cold February was followed by a dry, mild March. Bud break was in late April, right on time. May did not follow suit as hail on May 7 damaged some emerging shoots. Fortunately the damage was

mostly cosmetic to only the base of the shoots as the clusters had not yet unfolded.

May was dry as was June and July. This made for a good crop (excellent pollination conditions) with small berries (water stressed vines), but young vines were beginning to show signs of excessive water stress (stunted growth and yellowing basal leaves).

Veraison began in late July under ideal conditions: hot and dry. Color change was quick and uniform setting the stage for high quality. Mid-August presented a big shift with humid, wet nights and frequent quick, hard showers. This slowed the ripening process and elevated disease pressure. Reds were harvested from September 29 to October 3.

WINEMAKING

Grapes were triple sorted, destemmed and lightly crushed. Fermented cool with gentle pump-overs early and then punch downs once the cap formed. Pressing took place after about 18 to 20 days. The wine was aged for 12 months in older French oak barrels. Then aged an additional 6 months in tank. 35% Merlot, 27% Cabernet Franc, 23% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 15% Petit Verdot. 7,456 bottles produced. Alcohol 12.4%. Drink now through 2030.