

Linden Vineyards 2020 Claret

Style

The 2020 Claret shows aromas of crunchy red fruits, and spring garden herbs. It is medium bodied with a sappy freshness and a quaffable graceful finish.

Food Pairings

Rare tuna, steak tartare, white pizza.

Vineyards

Hardscrabble Vineyard (78%), Fauquier Co. 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 (17%), Warren Co. 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 (5%), Warren Co. is just 1 mile north of Linden Vineyards at 1,300 feet contributes acidity and verve. Vines planted in 1998 and 1999.

Vintage 2020

Winter ended early, quickly initiating a very early bud break. From April to early May we were on frost alert with many close calls. May 9 (Mother's Day) finally nipped Chardonnay and Merlot vines resulting in reduced yields.

Cooler than average April and May also slowed vine development, but a warm streak in June allowed for good flowering and berry set. A hot, dry mid-July slowed vine growth at just the right time. The vines were looking balanced and ready to put their energy into ripening for veraison.

Late July gave us a few welcome rain showers that refreshed the vines, but those showers eventually became more steady rains and by mid-August the soils were close to saturated. This slowed the veraison process and pushed predicted harvest dates 7 to 10 days behind average. Smoke haze from the west coast fires filtered sunlight on some days.

Soil water holding capacity and vine age played a critical role in determining picking strategies. Reds were harvested from early to mid-October. They are more feminine in style as extractions were gentle due to uneven ripening. Cabernet Franc provided the ripest blending component. Cabernet Sauvignon gave freshness and verve. It was a good Claret vintage.

Winemaking

Grapes were triple sorted, destemmed and lightly crushed. Fermented warm 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. Unfined. 50% Cabernet Sauvignon, 30% Merlot, 16% Cabernet Franc, and 4% Petit Verdot. 7,580 bottles produced. Alcohol 12.9%. Drink now through 2028.

