

# Linden Vineyards 2019 Hardscrabble Red

## Style

Floral, red currant, dried herbs de Provence, and wood smoke. Elegant and juicy with fine-grained, silky, lingering tannins.

## Food Pairings

Lamb shanks, wild mushroom pasta, beef Burgundy.

## Vineyards

Hardscrabble Vineyard is on top of the Blue Ridge at 1,200 to 1,400 feet with an eastern to southern slope. Moderately shallow, well-drained, rocky, granite soils give depth, structure, and length to the Cabernet Sauvignon, while more clay-based soils are dedicated to Merlot. Most of the vines are 10 to 20 years old and planted at 1,500 to 2,500 vines per acre.

## Vintage

2019 was a very strong, ripe vintage, though yields were down as some varieties recovered from rainy 2018.

Bud break in late April was normal and consistent. A warm, wet May stimulated rapid shoot growth. Some vineyard blocks exhibited very uneven shoot development. An early bloom (late May through early June) was successful under ideal conditions (warm and sunny).

Late June was marked by a moderate hailstorm that bruised and damaged berries on the top/west side of the canopy. Most, but not all of these berries shriveled and fell off. However there were still a significant number of compromised berries that would have the potential to present rot and uneven ripening issues later in the season.

July started a long hot dry period, which would last until harvest was over. There remained ample moisture in the ground, so vines did not slow their vegetative cycle until early August (right on time for véraison). A hot, dry August accelerated ripening.

Red grapes were picked under hot dry conditions, which is most unusual as a few decades ago we often had to wear gloves to keep our fingers warm. While it was an easy harvest, questions lingered about the timing of picking as the juice was very ripe, but tannins lagged in maturity. We opted to pick on the early side to preserve freshness and integrity of terroir. Extractions were gentle so as not to pick up any greenness or bitterness from seeds. Harvest was September 23 through 27, 2019.

## Winemaking

This is a selection of the best vineyard blocks at Hardscrabble. Extractions were moderate with more focus on early timing of pump-overs and later punch downs. Fermentation temperatures were kept slightly cooler than normal. Post fermentation maceration temperatures and lengths were average in length. The wine was aged in new (70%) and slightly-used French oak barrels for 22 months. Bottled August 2021. 65% Cabernet Sauvignon, 19% Cabernet Franc and 16% Merlot. 13.1% alc. Drink through 2030. 3,204 bottles produced.

