

2022 LINDEN VINEYARDS HARDSCRABBLE RED

STYLE

Finessed and nuanced, this is the wine to ponder. It constantly changes in the glass. You need to be quiet when drinking this wine. No parties. This wine has some of the finest tannins Linden has ever produced.

FOOD PAIRINGS

This is the perfect duck wine: duck breast, roasted duck, duck confit duck rillettes. Chicken or turkey thighs could substitute, but you would be missing out.

VINEYARD

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 and Cabernet Franc 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

The weather of vintage 2022 initially challenged winegrowers with climate change influenced inconsistency. However a key stretch of September sun and low humidity ultimately ripened some impressive grapes.

April bud break was early. Four inches of snow fell just before budbreak. Frost events on April 20 and then again on April 28 were just a degree or two warmer than would damage the tender shoots. "By the skin of our teeth" the crop survived. May was warm and wet encouraging rapid vine development. June flowering occurred under ideal conditions resulting in very large clusters. Frequent thunderstorms in mid-summer encouraged vine vigor and a large potential crop that would need to be judiciously thinned.

Hail in late July did minor damage to exposed clusters. Fortunately we had significantly reduced leaf pulling severity just for this reason: the leaves would act as umbrellas to shield the clusters from hailstones.

Veraison was late and in some cases uneven. We started to dry out in late August, but then on and off rains in early September delayed the beginning of harvest.

Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc were all picked on September 27 ahead of Hurricane Ian. Some Cabernet Sauvignon stayed on the vine until October 10 and 12.

WINEMAKING

Sorted and destemmed. Fermented warm with gentle pump-overs early and then punch downs once the cap formed. Pressing took place after about 20 to 28 days. The wine was aged for 12 months in used and new French oak barrels. 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 16% Cabernet Franc, and 2% Merlot. Bottled in April 2024. 2,945 bottles produced. Alcohol 13.3%. Drink 2026 through 2032.