

2010 Petit verdot
Santa Ynez Valley

88% Petit Verdot/12% Merlot from the Baehner-Fournier Estate

Petit Verdot, perhaps the most misunderstood of the five Bordeaux varietals, likely predates the dominant Cabernet Sauvignon on the Left Bank of Gironde River. Its origins are obscure, with its first mention in literature on the Bordeaux region dating to the early eighteenth century, but it probably originated in points further south, in the Tarn Valley near the southwestern French city of Toulouse. It has fallen out of favor in Bordeaux, due in no small part to its tendency to ripen very late in the season, often after the first major winter rains. In California, meanwhile, Petit Verdot has found a favorable home where it easily ripens during the Indian Summers for which the state is known.

Made of 100% estate grown grapes from the Baehner-Fournier Vineyard, our 2010 Petit Verdot originates from the edges of two gravelly blocks planted along the ridgeline that runs from North to South through the estate. The high quality French clone 400 is used exclusively. Hugging the side of a steeply terraced slope, the vines are subject to punishing winds which limit the crop load and augment the concentration of the grapes. Fruit, picked at moderate levels of ripeness, is destemmed and gently crushed to small open top fermenters and, after a 3 day cold-soak, spends an average of 18 days on skins to best extract the intense flavors and aromas that the estate vineyard produces. Aging for 19 months in 20% new French oak has resulted in a surprisingly soft and lush mouthfeel for the normally austere Petit Verdot. A light pre-bottling fining with three egg whites per barrel further softens the structure of the wine and enhances the perception of fruit on the fore-palate.

Intense aromas of cherry cola and incense are highlighted by nuances of licorice, violet and new saddle leather. On the palate, our 2010 Petit Verdot displays further black cherry and licorice characteristics framed by supple tannins and a fresh burst of acid. Surprisingly approachable for a young Petit Verdot, the wine is positively delicious now and will evolve nicely with a further 5 years of bottle age.

96 cases produced

Nick de Luca, Winemaker