



EARLY
MOUNTAIN

2016 Foothills

Vineyard Block: Quaker Run Block 5 Merlot, Quaker Run Block 3 Syrah, EMV Block 6 Petit Verdot, EMV Block 10 Merlot, Baer Ridge Cab Franc, Malick Petit Verdot, Quaker Run Block 2 Cab Sauv, Malick Vineyards Petit Manseng, Malick Vineyard Tannat

Clone/Rootstock: Merlot 3, 101-14; Merlot 181, 101-14; Syrah 470, 101-14; Petit Verdot 2, 101-14; Cab Sauv412, 169, 338, FPS04, Riparia Gloire, Petit Manseng, Tannat

Composition: 39% Merlot, 19% Petit Verdot, 18% Syrah, 10% Cab Franc, 9% Cab Sauv, 2% Tannat, 3% Petit Manseng

Vintage Description: 2016 began with very cold winter temperatures and early spring showers. Though the summer saw normal levels of precipitation, the latter portion of the growing season was warm and dry, making for ripe and concentrated whites, leading to significant rain events later in the fall. The fruit for the components of this wine was picked prior to major rain events, resulting in high quality raw material for the wine.

Winemaker Note: When I am asked to name my favorite wine that we make, I always dodge that question (so fast), and I talk about the wines I most enjoy making. So far that has been Five Forks, the white wine sibling of Foothills. With the 2016, I realized how much I also enjoy making this wine. Why is there so much pleasure in making two of our most affordable wines? Part of the reason is that both wines are made from vineyard blocks that produce fruit that stands in contrast to how we are told red wine or white wine should be, and that's refreshing. Also, as someone who does not have unlimited resources, these wines are closest to the price range where I normally drink wine, so self interest makes the stakes higher. We are fortunate enough to live in a time when wines that are nimble and fresh are given respect for their versatility and inherent deliciousness, and no longer do wines need to be stacked and packed to be considered of quality. We start this blend in the vineyard, drawing from our blocks whose wines want to be fresh, wide eyed, earnest even. While our reserve lots call for an approach that favors structure and concentration, here we work so that we can drink now, capturing inherent complexity from the fermenter with an eye on our most dexterous red wine.

Wine Description: The 2016 Foothills is based in Merlot, a grape known for its plush, black fruited flavors. We have that here, but we also find the smoky, peppered, herbal-mint combination of the Cabernet Franc and Syrah roaming the periphery of the aromas and flavors. These accents and the dash of sit-up-straight structure from the Petit Verdot and Cabernet Sauvignon provide counterpoint to the wine's fruit-given charm. This year we played with a small addition of Petit Manseng which gives the wine an unexpected juiciness and gathers the aromas of all the blending components into a ball and thrusts them up to the olfacto-sphere where they float and dance along.

