

Margins ‘Santa Cruz Mountains Rosé’ 2020

Producer - Megan Bell

Provenance: Santa Clara Valley and Santa Cruz Mountains

Farming: Zayante is low spray conventional, began conversion to organic farming in 2020. Makjavich is organic and farmed by Megan and the owner Larry Makjavich

Grape(s): 46% Barbera, 42% Merlot, 12% Petite Sirah

Vineyard:

Barbera and Petite Sirah from Zayante Vineyard, an own-rooted, high elevation vineyard with loamy soils rich in sandstone, schist and shale.

Merlot from Makjavich vineyard she cofarms in the Santa Cruz Mountains at 1300 ft elevation and surrounded by redwood trees

Vintage: In 2020, Megan doubled her production, moved to a new winery and was forced to evacuate her home due to wildfires just after the first pick. The growing season also presented challenges with heatwaves and a powdery mildew pressure across the Santa Cruz Mountains, she was obliged to pick earlier and find ways to manage and alkalinity.

Fermentation/ Aging: whole cluster pressed to steel for spontaneous fermentation. Racked to barrel for 4.5 months aging

Sulfite: 20 ppm a week before bottling



The Producer:

“Complicated things don’t really interest me,” Megan muses “I want wine to be thought of as something that’s very not complicated - that’s something that affected me a lot at the beginning.” Megan’s interest in wine evolved from high-school brewing experiments into studies at UC Davis. From the beginning, she’s found the pall of mystery that hangs over wine to be discouraging and totally unnecessary. Her project, initially funded through a crowdsourcing campaign, is dedicated to the less evangelized regions of California and their scrappy mom ‘n pop vineyards. The wines are delicious, totally unfussy and super clean.

The Vineyard:

The Barbera is from Zayante Vineyard, a ‘super super remote’ high-elevation vineyard totalling about 18 acres situated in the midst of a redwood forest. A mix of different varieties planted without grafting in loamy soils rich in sandstone, schist and shale and nurtured according to organic practices without any irrigation.

The Merlot and Petite Sirah come from Makjavich Vineyard that Megan farms with owner Larry Makjavich. “I love it there,” Megan says of the steep, south facing slope with a few out to the sea 5 miles away. Planted around 2011, the vineyard is mostly

Pinot Noir with Merlot and a random half row of Petit Sirah and Cabernet Sauvignon that Megan adds to different wines in different years. The soils are fine, loamy sandstone and shale with more clay at the bottom and more sandy soils at the top.

Since joining Larry in the vineyard, Megan has been changing the training method of the Pinot Noir from spur to cane pruning to account for the excessively high vigor of the stie. “Vegetal growth is out of control,” she says but other than that there are very few farming inputs. “We don’t do a lot of composting or tillage, some rows might get ripped every 5-10 years but there’s not alot of inputs besides managing for mildew.” Makjavich’s property is one of the first registered organic farms in the country.

2020 was an especially challenging year for Megan. She moved into a new winery space with a friend which brought with it the joys of permitting and licensing paperwork, and doubled her production from 1,000 cases to 2,000 cases without hiring additional help. ‘I didn’t quite realize how much that was going to be for one person’ she told us. To further complicate matters the neighborhood where she lives was evacuated due to wildfires after the very first pick. With 27 tons left to pick and process, Megan was living in a friend’s guest room while managing a new workflow in a new space.

The growing season also presented challenges with heatwaves frontloading pick dates to catch as much acidity as possible. Despite all this Megan highlights that she thinks “quality was outstanding for white wines in 2020.”

The grapes for the rose were picked two weeks early.

The Winery:

Lots were whole cluster pressed into steel tank for spontaneous fermentation. Transferred to neutral barrel for 5 months of lees aging. After 4.5 months aging, base wines are racked into tank with an addition of 20 ppm sulfite and bottled a week after without finning or filtration.

For more details email info@OlmsteadWine.com

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