

Oyster River 'American Red Wine' 2018

Producer: Brian Smith

Provenance: Warren, Maine

Farming: Conventional

Grape(s): 80% Baco Noir from Doyle Vineyards in the Finger Lakes, 20% Cabernet Sauvignon from Robbins Hollow Farm in North Fork, Long Island.

Fermentation/ Aging: Spontaneously fermented in harvest bins with about 20% stem inclusion. Pressed at dryness into neutral oak for 11 months aging.

Vintage: Brian credits the particular weather conditions of 2018 with a brighter, leaner style.

Fining/ Filtration: none.

Sulfur: 50 ppm total



The Producer:

Times are tough for dreamers but Brian Smith and his wife Allie have managed to defy the blue-screened modernity to create an edenic pocket dimension in rural Warren, Maine. Fixated on embodying what was best in the pre industrial world, they've built a polyculture farm with a focus on community. Brian delivers produce to the nearby town of Rockland in a literal horse carriage from 1937 and they host pizza parties and music in a charming little space they built up recently. They grow a small patch of cold weather hybrid grapes, an orchard of cider apples, vegetables and livestock all integrated together and mutually supporting. The agriculture is purely organic, they write: "Farming without the use of chemical pesticides and fertilizers is the way of the past and the way of the future." The wines and ciders are similarly old school in style, unpretentious and priced to reflect their belief that wine is for the people!

The Vineyard:

Baco Noir is a less commonly known cold climate hybrid created by Frenchman Francois Baco in the late 19th century by crossing Folle Blanche and an unknown member of the American *Vitis Ruperia* family. Coming from Doyle Vineyards in the Finger Lakes, the Baco Noir is sourced from Pulteney Block on the West side of Keuka lake.

The remaining 20% is all Cabernet Sauvignon sourced from a portion of the Duckwalk Vineyard in North Fork, Long Island that is transitioning to a certified sustainable

agricultural program. The Cab is hand picked as ripe as they can get it in early-mid November which usually ends up between 20-22 brix.

Of 2018 Brian writes us: “The Baco, already an early grape, had to be harvested a little earlier because of extreme heat early in the Fall. On the Cab, it was a difficult year to ripen in Long Island. Because of these slightly less ripe scenarios the 2018 Red is a little lighter, and more towards the "racy red" style that I am really loving to drink these days. “

The Winery:

For the Baco Noir, the 20 ton machine harvester juices the grapes as it pulls them from the vines. The machine is meant to pull grapes off the stems but Brian finds about 20% of the stems make their way into the bins. He takes a look and says "yeah, that doesn't look like too many stems" and ferments right in the bins.

The hand picked Cab allows for more flexibility but they are intended to produce one unified ‘fresh fruity’ red wine and the Cab is therefore processed in imitation: “Usually I throw in some whole clusters in the bottom of the bins(maybe 20%) and crush and destem the rest on top.”

Both varieties are fermented spontaneously and then pressed at dryness into neutral oak for 11 months aging on gross lees. The wine spends the winter months in their cold barn, nominally heated by a wood burning stove where the wine naturally clarifies thanks to the low temperatures. The wine is raked only once a week prior to bottling at which point they impart 30 ppm sulfite and then another 20 ppm at bottling. No fining or filtration.

For more email info@OlmsteadWine.com

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