



2012 Merlot Zayante Vineyard



The Wine

Zayante Vineyard, is located in the Upper Zayante area of the Santa Cruz Mountains on a southwest facing slope. The vineyard is owned and farmed by Greg Nolton and Kathleen Starkey. Planted in 1988, the 18 acre vineyard sits at an elevation of 1,100 to 1,300 feet. Monterey Bay influences combine with sandstone and loamy soils to produce wines with minerality and striking acidity. Plantings: Chardonnay, Zinfandel, Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Barbera, Grenache.

American Viticultural Area

Santa Cruz Mountains

Varietal Blend: 100% Merlot

Vine age: 1988

Harvested: October 10th

Bottled: August 2014

Fermentation: Native Yeast

Production: 340 Cases

ALC 13.7%

Tasting notes by consulting Master Sommelier Ian Cauble

The wine has a dark ruby red core moving to pink and light garnet hues on the rim. The nose is classic and pure exhibiting traits of Right Bank Bordeaux where this varietal is most famously grown within France. The nose is beautifully balanced and earth driven with aromas of freshly picked red currants, red plums, dried leather, bay leaf, red tobacco leaf, cedar box, wet violets and dried clay with a touch of baking spices. The palate is medium plus in body with a kiss of perceived sweetness to the fruit. Flavors on the palate confirm the nose with just ripened fruit flavors of red and black plums, tart red cherries, leather, green tobacco and a touch new oak.



The Santa Cruz Mountain American Viticultural Area

The Santa Cruz Mountains Appellation is nestled in one of the most unique natural environments in the world. Mountain terrain, marine influence, varied micro-climates, and distinctive soils combine to produce some of the finest conditions for winegrowing.

The Santa Cruz Mountains are called "America's Premier Mountain Appellation" because it was the first winegrowing region in the nation to be defined by a mountain range. The peak of Mount Madonna forms the southern boundary, and the sparkling waters of Half Moon Bay define the northern boundary. The minimum vineyard elevation is 400 feet on the ocean side and rises from 400 feet on the eastern San Francisco Bay side to 800 feet at the southeast boundary. Vineyards are planted as high as 3,200 feet. The appellation exceeds 400,000 acres although vineyard plantings are around 1,500 acres.

The Santa Cruz Mountains vineyards are among the precious few situated close to the cooling effects of the ocean and the San Francisco Bay. Many wineries boast breathtaking ocean views. The temperate climate typically encourages early bud break. During the growing season, the fog tends to roll in some sometime in the late afternoon with the sun burning it off the next morning. This allows the grapes to ripen in cooler temperatures. Harvest usually begins in mid-September with some vineyards harvesting as late as November. The longer growing season allows the grapes to mature slowly with intensely complex flavor.