



EARLY
MOUNTAIN

2020 Five Forks

*At the foot of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, nature is at once graceful and fierce. Early Mountain wines are made here through a combination of ingenuity and true grit. We gently tend to every vine so the wine that emerges from the cellar is a clear descendant of the fruit at harvest — a unique wine that respects its heritage while embracing evolution and adventure. **Virginian through and through.***

Blend: Petit Manseng 61%, Sauvignon Blanc 32%, Chardonnay 4%, Pinot Gris 3%

Winemaker Note: With Five Forks now on its sixth installment, we are honing the relationship between two very different grapes. As always, Petit Manseng desires the spotlight, wants the lead (it's an extrovert, a little type A), and Sauvignon blanc is happy to be the right hand, though it certainly vamps when PM is not looking. This pairing of grapes has become the foundation for our blending, and they give us a template to refine our technique in the cellar and our work in the vineyards. In a vintage like 2020, where the whites are lighter in style, we can work with higher proportions of Manseng and still maintain balance; the Sauvignon blanc is still able to make its mark, and there is a fresh, snappy feel to the wine as a whole. We have included small amounts of Chardonnay and Pinot gris to bring polish to the wine. There's no doubt these two grapes have an affinity for each other, regardless of vintage, and we are excited to cultivate their relationship.

Wine Description: With Petit Manseng in the lead, we feel the density of aroma and texture that are inherent to this grape. The aromatics flow from pear to peach to mango and are repeated as flavors in the palate, where the Sauvignon Blanc steps in with snappy green flavors, both herbs and piquant orchard fruit, and adds acid precision and a mineral finish. 2020 finds a way to embrace the textural nature of Petit Manseng while maintaining freshness of the Sauvignon blanc.

Food Pairing: Asian fusion menus- tropical & citrus fruit complement the complex heat and rich sauces.

In the Vineyard: *The growing season in Virginia was dynamic to say the least, adding to the chaotic nature of the year as a whole. Despite an early budbreak followed by frost risk in late April and early May, Early Mountain was lucky to avoid the worst of it with only a Petit Manseng block and some lower areas of Chardonnay impacted.*

The first half of the growing season was relatively dry and quite hot in June and July. Late July and early August brought a lot of moisture that was very challenging, but things dried out a bit heading into harvest. We ended up in a dance with the Atlantic, as tropical systems waltzed through every ten days for two months. Once again, we were lucky to be spared the worst of the weather, and we emerged at the end of harvest with a cellar full of high quality 2020 wines. In the spirit of every vintage being different than every other in our state, 2020 was unique in that the first half produced lighter wines with high acid and the second half brought riper, more classic wines.

