



EARLY MOUNTAIN

2020 Foothills

*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: 43% Cabernet Franc, 19% Merlot, 17% Cabernet Sauvignon, 16% Petit Verdot, 5% Petit Manseng

Winemaker Note: We always have fun making the multiple variety blends like Five Forks and Foothills. 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. As someone who does not have unlimited resources, these wines are closest to the price range where I normally drink wine; self interest makes the stakes higher. After a dense and relatively powerful 2019, we embraced the "normal Virginia" character of 2020 to make a more classic Foothills. Though an argument could be made that it is confusing to the market when the style changes from vintage to vintage, I would counter that we are simply communicating that Virginia has vintage variation, and when you try to hide the true character of a wine, it is almost always inferior to an honest presentation. Cabernet Franc takes the lead, by a long shot, with Merlot, Cabernet and Petit Verdot in almost equal proportions providing complexity of flavor and tannin. Foothills continues to be a Bordeaux-*ish* blend PV being used at much higher percentages than in France. It is now five years running that we splash (okay, it's a big splash this year) in Petit Manseng to play with the aromatics and texture of the wine.

Description: The aromas of the 2020 Foothills are snappy and alive, with red and black fruits and subtle dried herbs. It is medium bodied with soft tannins, bringing more to the table than would be expected of its price tag. The flavors are layered and many, allowing for more contemplative complexity than we are used to from an "everyday" wine.

In the Vineyard: *The growing season 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, 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.

Technical:

Bottled: July 5th, 2021 Cases produced: 1,165 Yeast: Ambient

Alcohol: 13.0% pH: 3.86 TA: 4.9 g/L RS: 0.23 g/L (Dry)