



EARLY MOUNTAIN

2020 Shenandoah Valley Cabernet Franc

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.

Variety: 100% Cabernet Franc

Winemaker Note: In 2020, we build on the strategy we started in 2017 of delineating our Cabernet Francs by the multiple places they are grown, with three vineyard specific wines and two regional blends. Both the Madison County and Shenandoah Valley bottlings reflect the ping pong character of the last four vintages, moving back to a more classic character after the intensity and power of the hot, dry 2019 vintage, which followed the delicate, rain-influenced 2018s. Though we talk about the regional bottlings as being lighter in style in our normal vintages, we stand by our commitment to not only embrace place, but also vintage; this is Virginia after all, and we have different conditions every year. We want to celebrate this, instead of forcing the wines to act the same every time. In 2020, we almost had two vintages in one, with the early picked wines being light and fresh and the wines from the end of harvest having more power. The Shenandoah Valley, in particular, had a long season and this wine was made with two vineyard picks, one in the middle of harvest, in the transition, and one later and riper. In particular the north valley vineyard near Woodstock is bringing serious depth and concentration, while the Timberville vineyard balances and contributes aromatically. We are excited to offer the 2020 Shenandoah Valley Cabernet Franc as an expression of this vintage and region.

Wine description: We like to say our approach to Cabernet Franc is more Burgundy than Bordeaux, meaning we look for silky rather than tannic structure and favor the aromatic potential of the grape over the flavor of the barrel. In 2020, this was as true as it ever was. While the flavors are definitely Cabernet Franc, this texture is reminiscent of Pinot Noir, and you can see why we believe this grape does best as a varietal wine when it is unencumbered by new oak and long aging. The result is a wine that is both graceful in stature and compelling in detail, walking a fine line between subtlety and complexity. The aromas are a mingling of red and black fruits with rosemary, forest mushrooms and black pepper. The fruit/savory play continues on the palate, which is rich with persistent, ripe tannins and subtle acidity. This wine demands that you both engage its aromatic offering and pour yourself another glass.

Food pairing: Works beautifully with traditional Cab Franc pairings of roast lamb and fuller flavor meats, but with its silken texture and savory notes it also bridges to lighter dishes with umami notes.

Cellaring: This wine has already entered its drinking window and should continue to develop over the next two to five years.

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.

Vineyard Block: Shenandoah Springs Vineyard, Baer Ridge Vineyard

Clone/Rootstock: Cabernet Franc 214, 3309

Technical:	Cases produced: 251	Bottled: 7/6/21	
	Yeast: Ambient	Alcohol: 13.3%	
	pH: 3.79	TA: 4.7 g/L	RS: Dry, 0.17 g/L