



EARLY MOUNTAIN

2019 Shenandoah Springs 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.

Accolades: Gold Medal, 2020 Governor's Cup Competition (2017 v.)

Variety: 100% Cabernet Franc

SRP: \$45

Winemaker Note: In the 2019 vintage, this bottling is one of five expressions of Cabernet Franc that we produced. We believe this grape is reflective of place and transparent of site when handled appropriately, and we are offering both regional and vineyard specific bottlings to highlight these expressions. In general we look to the valley for finesse, aromatic density and silken texture, but the wines tend to deepen as we move north, as it is slightly lower elevation and one of the driest parts of the East Coast. In 2019 all of our reds were riper, with more richness than usual, and the Shenandoah Springs is the most extreme example of the northern valley meets a hot and dry vintage. A smallish crop combined with a very long and warm ripening period make this one of the the most powerful Cabernet Francs we have bottled.

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. Though the 2019 vintage brought deep ripeness and power, we stayed true to our approach, and the result is a wine that brings purity to the dense black fruit of the vintage with plenty of plum, black cherry and graphite. While ripe and rich, the wine is also wound tight around the tannic structure, making it slow to show its true character and hungry for oxygen. Once open, the density of the wine makes for impact and length, carrying the flavors and tannin through the finish.

Cellaring: This wine should continue to develop over the next seven to ten years.

In the Vineyard: 2019 was an excellent vintage with balanced whites and reds with ripe intensity and richness. The season began early, with picking for sparkling at the very beginning of August, resulting from a moderately early budbreak. While this notably early start to the vintage was psychologically challenging, the fruit was well-balanced and we're excited to see how it develops in the cellar.

It is understandable to compare 2019 to 2017, however yields were more typical and balanced in 2019, compared to high yielding 2017. We were able to apply the learnings from the very ripe 2017 vintage to our farming and picking decisions in 2019, which often led us to pick blocks earlier; and rather than simply pursuing sugar ripeness, we have been able to farm and pick based on phenological ripeness and aromatic complexity.

Vineyard Block: Shenandoah Springs Vineyard **Clone/Rootstock:** Cab Franc 214 and 327

Technical: Cases produced: 231 Bottled: 7 January 2021
Yeast: Ambient Alcohol: 14%

pH: 3.88

TA: 5.1 g/L

RS: Dry, 0.25 g/L