



EARLY MOUNTAIN

2020 Young Wine Chambourcin

The young wine project started as a conversation between Ben and Nicolas Mestre of Williams Corner, our distributor partner, even before they worked together with Early Mountain wines. The idea was to use hybrid grapes, made in a natural way, to make a delicious, fun, accessible wine that can be enjoyed ... always. Much like our wines bottled in screwcap, this bottle is telling you it's okay to open now, and in fact you should. In a broader sense, we are also engaging in a conversation of sustainability and challenging some of the bias that lingers around hybrid grapes. In fact when they are grown in good places and made in a way that embraces their inherent nature, they can be so good as to be surprising.

Grape Variety: 87% Chambourcin, 13% Vidal Blanc

Winemaker Note: While the goal of this project is wine that is joyous/casual/chill, the minimalist approach is actually one of the more challenging ways to make clean and delicious wines. Because of that, we source the grapes from the Shenandoah Valley, where cooler temps give us higher acidity that protects the grapes through fermentation and the wine during aging. We co-fermented Vidal blanc to bring some depth to the aromatic and flavor profiles, and we also did a portion of this white grape fermented on the skins, allowing us to blend a bit of structure into the tannin-light Chambourcin. This was not fined or filtered, and other than a small dose of sulfur dioxide at bottling, nothing was added but the grapes.

Wine Description: Chambourcin is a grape that, if you try to make it taste like vinifera, will end up similar to jogging with a cat on a leash. You can do it, but it's going to be weird, some folks may disapprove, and it will get its revenge while you sleep (the cat will). Chambourcin's spirit animal is not a cat, but rather some theoretical "always puppy": soft, playful, endlessly charming, won't stop chewing the cat's leash. It is a red wine that carries a tannin load closer to that of most white wines, and like whites, is freshest and juiciest when there is plenty of acidity. For that reason it is perfect with a chill, and the soft tannins and bright fruit are reminiscent of the grape Gamay, when it is made in a way to highlight its juicy fruit, and that's why in the early days of this wine, Early Mountain veteran, Patt Eagan, coined the term "Chambojolais". He should put that on a T-shirt.

Vineyard Block: Barren Ridge, Bluestone Vineyard, Sherman's Ridge

Technical: Bottled, unfiltered: May 24, 2021 Cases produced: 458 Yeast: Ambient

Alcohol: 11.7%

pH: 3.59

TA: 5.1 g/L

RS: 0.14 g/L (dry)

In the Vineyard: *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. Hybrid grapes like Chambourcin and Vidal handle these Virginia vintages well in that they are generally able to hang on the vine through wet weather longer than the average vinifera grape, and they are more adapted to the warmth and humidity.*