



2021

100% MERLOT

BLOCK: 8 :: CLONE: 181

DEGRADED TUFA TO SANDY LOAM SOILS

HILLSIDE SLOPE :: 800 FEET

EAST SIDE SLOPE, WEST/NORTHWEST FACING

2021 VINTAGE

14.5% ALCOHOL :: 2 BARRELS

WINEMAKER: JULIEN FAYARD

BRION

MERLOT

ECOTONE VINEYARD

NAPA VALLEY

Located in an “ecotone” between valley and mountain, as the name implies, this vineyard occupies one of those middle zones that are proving to be the best vineyards in Napa, and not just historically. With each Napa Valley vintage, wines from these places are showing up as superior in all respects, not only among their peers but amongst all the wines of the world.

In the first years of working with the fruit from this vineyard, the Merlot came in ahead of the Cabernet, as is usual for the variety. What stood out was that the grape clusters were perfectly immaculate. Going through crush, the must of those couple of tons was so compelling, a small amount intended for a Bordeaux-style red blend was reserved to bottle on its own.

Neatly nested in its own intimate valley on the flank of Howell Mountain, Ecotone produces wine of great character and intensity. While warm and well-exposed to the sun during the day, the site offers an acidity from the altitude’s fresher nights and the addition of the minerality from the soil, which is heavy with rock content and decidedly volcanic.

In this planting, the Merlot, lush and textured, typically offers sweet aromatics in its blend of ripe and dark fruits. The 2021 Ecotone Merlot shows a rich mouth-coating texture with very fine velvety tannins. Full red fruit bouquet with sweet mid-palate. The ripe red fruit flavors and sweet oak are seductively integrated with the touch of 80% new French oak.

ECOTONE: from “ecology” or “ecos” (Greek: house, dwelling, singular place) plus “tone” (from “tonos,” Greek: tension), Ecotone is a region of transition between two biological communities, sometimes forming an area of new and distinct qualities, often accompanied by increased diversity and abundance that are more than the sum of the neighboring zones.

—brionwines.com—