

2017 Division Malbec “Côt”

Serra Vineyard

Applegate Valley AVA

Since 2013 when we began working with the Quady North vineyards for Loire clones of Cabernet Franc, we’ve been smitten with the granite rich Applegate Valley AVA in the hills above the Applegate River. While warmer and drier than the Willamette Valley, the hills and valleys to the west of the Rogue seem to harness the perfect climate for growing Loire varieties and our early successes with Cabernet Franc, encouraged us to seek out the little known “Côt” clone of Malbec that’s natively found in the Touraine, Saumur and Anjou regions of the Loire Valley.

Scott & Krissa Fernandes are not only some of the nicest people we’ve met in the wine industry, they’re also fantastic growers and have utilized the expertise of Herb Quady, our other grower in the region, with fantastic results. The Serra Vineyard site is on the lower slopes of the Applegate range and features loamy/clay and marine sediment over broken Oregon pink granite. The Fernandes family stick to sustainable farming practices in hopes of keeping the vineyard ecosystem healthy for the future ages to come.

The 2017 growing season was a bit of a roller coaster with wild fires raging in southern Oregon shortly before harvest. We picked the Malbec at Serra relatively late (October 1st) hoping to take advantage of the long growing season in 2017 and to get past the smoky skies. Most of the Malbec is used as a wonderful blending component for our “Beton” wine, but after last year’s fantastic results making a small single variety bottling, we knew we needed to keep seeing how this wine would evolve under it’s own bottling.

As has become our modus operandi for fermentations, we utilized the pied de cuve (native yeast build ups) technique to harness as much of the native yeast flora from the site to best express the place each of these wines came from. We had just enough grapes to fill one 1.5 ton fermenter bin and we incorporated a fair amount of whole clusters to the ferment to bring out the spicy and red fruit character. We only aged one barrel of Malbec, as the rest of the wine was combined with the other components of the Beton and aged in a cement tank.

The 2017 Malbec “Côt” is distinct, terroir driven, and unique in flavor profile relative to Malbecs from other parts of the world. Clocking in at a low 12.1% alcohol, the wine is very light on its feet, but dense in flavor for so little alcohol. Dominated by black licorice and blueberry with hints of menthol and tea-biscuit, the wine offers an interesting note of poblano pepper, which we think makes it a fascinating wine for the table. Once again, we only make 25 cases of Malbec this year, so it won’t be around long!

Alc - 12.1%, pH 3.7, 25 cases

