



2013 MERITAGE LAKE COUNTY

Those of you who loved the Diamond Ridge Vineyards Aspects blend will adore this blend of 81% Merlot and 19% Cabernet Franc.

Diamond Ridge Vineyards is located at the southeast corner of Clear Lake in Lake County. One of the best sites in California for these two varieties. The Merlot is unlike any other in the State, and resembles more the wines of Pomerol, with dense structure, lush mouthfeel and a rich core of fruit. The site's high altitude dispels any herbaceous character in either variety and imparts firm tannic framing to the Cabernet Franc and an aggressive spiciness which perfectly complements the softer Merlot.

The result is a complex mixture of bright red fruit aromas: grenadine, white cherry and black raspberry which are well preserved by the lake effect which cools the vineyard each afternoon. Droughty herbs that surround the site impart "air-oir" -- sage and bay laurel elements which are apparent in the nose. The volcanic soil imparts a racy mineral energy to the palate and gives the wine a prolonged aging trajectory. After 51 months in neutral cooperage, the wine remains fresh and purple, and will repay extensive further cellaring. Delicious now or in two decades. Recommended with rosemary lamb, wild mushrooms or ratatouille.

81% Merlot
19% Cabernet Franc

Diamond Ridge Vineyards, Clearlake
Harvested 12 October
24.3 Brix

Fermentation techniques:

Anchor NT 112 yeast inoculum
10 g.L Bois Frais Alliers chips
14-day maceration

Elevage details:

Four weeks microbùllage pre ML
51 months in 20-year old neutral French oak
Alcohol sweet spot at 14.2%
pH 3.80 at bottling

198 cases produced.

For more details, visit www.winesmithwines.com

We Smiths offer small lots of extraordinary hand-crafted wines which explore French winemaking traditions in California.