



c.a.v.e.

courtship and vigilant enology

Spring 2019

“Hard to say and easy to drink” relates perfectly to Pech Merle, but it also speaks to our newest varietal, Carignan.

First things first - How do you pronounce this varietal and what does it mean? The French spelling is Carignan, pronounced “care-in-yen”. The Californians decided to add a letter “e” at the end (Carignane), pronouncing it “care-in-YAYne”. Given our French roots, we chose to go with the French spelling, Carignan (“care-in-yen”).

Carignan is a grape variety originating in Spain but now widely planted in southern France. For many years it was also widely planted in California’s central valley as well as Napa and Mendocino counties. We had always talked about producing a stand-alone varietal and knew that one of the best kept secrets in Mendocino County is the many vineyards of old-vine Carignan scattered among the newer plantings. Well Mendocino sure did deliver and produced a hidden gem on a slope near Robinson Creek, south of Ukiah.



This exceptional, secluded old-vine Carignan vineyard is called Caballo Blanco (White Horse). The vineyard is 75 year-old, dry farmed, and certified Organic. The owners Aldis and Nancy Baltins are committed to quality and that commitment shows up in each and every harvest. The vineyard produces a light crop ranging from 1-3 tons per year of highly flavored, intense, fruit that produce outstanding dark, tannic, and richly flavored wines.

2017 is the first-ever vintage of Carignan for Pech Merle. This vintage, although youthful, opens with a slight tannin gripe at entry but passes on to a plush, dense and rich fruit mid-pallet that is very satisfying. The richness of the texture and long finish are impressive. Carignan is known for its intense berry characters and bright acidity that enhance extended aging. Every vintage is different but with that said I’m feeling like the 2017 may become our new benchmark in its very first vintage!



The nose is powerful and intricate with aromas of rose petal, Violets, cherry syrup, tobacco leaf. Equally as intense, the mouth is layered with black cherry, raspberry, plum, and cola. A rich round mouthfeel, balanced with bright fruit and acidity, give this wine the duality of being enjoyable young as well as the ability to age. Whether Moroccan, Mexican, Mediterranean, or Mignon; Carignan pairs well with almost any meal, especially rich spicy foods.

Enjoy with food and friends and you will be enriched forever.

Salute’

John Pepe

John Pepe, Winemaker