



2018 MERLOT NAPA VALLEY

HISTORY

The wines of La Jota have deep roots in Napa Valley. Back in 1888, winemaking pioneer W.S. Keyes planted some of the first vines on Howell Mountain, and 10 years later his contemporary, Fredrick Hess, built a stone winery and established La Jota Vineyard Co., named for its location on the Mexican parcel Rancho La Jota. Both men won medals for their Howell Mountain wines in the Paris Exposition of 1900.

Today, La Jota Vineyard Co. proudly carries on this great legacy with its small-production mountain Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, and Chardonnay. All La Jota wines are sourced from the winery's estate and from nearby W.S. Keyes Vineyard, and they capture the intense fruit and mineral complexity of these cool-climate origins.

VINEYARD

The La Jota Vineyard lies high upon a volcanic plateau, looking east over Napa Valley. Surrounded by pine, fir, oak and madrone trees, the estate stands out because of its cool, windswept climate. Here we look to vineyard blocks that produce soft-textured Cabernet Sauvignon for wines of earlier approachability, and where the decomposed granite soils of our W.S. Keyes Vineyard impart a pop of bright fruit character and broader tannins.

WINEMAKING

We hand-harvested grapes into small, 30-pound boxes to prevent crushing, and then we brought them to the winery for hand-sorting. After destemming and light crushing, the must was cold-soaked for gentle color, flavor and tannin extraction. Winemaker Chris Carpenter fermented the juice with native yeast in a combination of open and closed-top stainless-steel tanks. Following gentle basket press, the wine underwent in-barrel malolactic fermentation, rounding the acidity and integrating the vanilla character of French oak. The wine was barrel-aged for 22 months and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

Late winter rains followed by a spring marked with intermittent cloudy skies likely delayed bud-break and flowering. This delay led to ideal fruit set conditions, driving up overall volumes by 20-30%. Steady summer heat accumulation with only a couple of short hike spikes combined with a near-perfect fall season created great phenolic accumulation without high sugar concentration.

The balance between nobility and approachability are the continued hallmarks of the La Jota Howell Mountain Merlot. Sourced from vineyards with pedigrees dating back to the 1800s, this wine continues to carry the torch of Howell Mountain's greatness. The aromatics are lifted with plum, huckleberry and minerality leading the way. Bittersweet chocolate and dried herbs add the punctuation to an incredibly long balanced finish.

ACCLAIM

95 Points - Jeb Dunnuck, *JebDunnuck.com*, January 2021

94+ Points - Lisa Perrotti-Brown, *Robert Parker Wine Advocate*, January 2021

TECHNICAL NOTES

BLEND COMPOSITION

90.5% Merlot
5% Petit Verdot
4.5% Tannat

HARVEST DATES

October 4 to October 30

FERMENTATION

Native Yeast Fermentation

MACERATION

20 days

BARREL AGING

22 months in French oak
(74% new)

ALCOHOL BY VOLUME

14.5%

WINE PH

3.42

WINE ACIDITY

.65g/100ml

VINEYARD

La Jota Vineyard
W.S. Keyes Vineyard