



# Merry Monks

## Wine Club of Cantiga Wineworks



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## Spotlight on Sustainability

We love living in the Sierra Foothills because industrial farming is pretty much non-existent here. This is the land of small, family-owned farms—and sustainable practices come naturally to the small farmer. Sustainability has always been a lively topic at Cantiga, as we see it as an imperative of our time. Our pursuit of best practices in the vineyard and winery have evolved over the years, reflecting an unfolding conversation between local farmers, the wine industry and government about our shared responsibility to our environment.

When we were preparing to plant our vineyard in 2002, the California Wine Institute had just released a new self-assessment program for Sustainable Winegrowing. We completed the training, which focused on practices such as “deficit irrigation management”—at the time a relatively new approach to conserving water and improving grape quality. This involves using data from moisture monitoring probes to deliver a very precise, limited amount of water through drip irrigation, which is a considerable improvement over the old-style flood irrigation, overhead sprinklers or even unmonitored drip irrigation. Other practices we adopted include site-specific soil nutrient additions, and a carefully selected cover crop for erosion control and soil nutrition. We also decided to go a step further than most vineyard owners by avoiding any herbicides or pesticides. Instead, we manage our cover crop with weed whackers and an implement called a “hoe plow,” in which a strip of cover crop beneath the vines is cut with a physical blade and invasive weeds are removed by hand.

As the vineyard matured, we continued to update our farming practices to minimize our environmental impact. This included moving to using only “like organic” sprays, including our preventive regiment of foliar sprays (typically sulfur) that prevent the onset of disease or mildew, thus avoiding the use of harsher chemicals used for treating problems. Although we opted to not go through the very intensive process of becoming certified organic, everything we do is in the same spirit.

Over the life of the vineyard, we have coordinated with government entities as well, such as our county’s agricultural department’s efforts to monitor potential new pests in the vineyards with sticky traps. We participate in both county and state water programs, implementing practices that protect the watersheds.

Anyone who has heard our “spiel” understands that our sustainability efforts are mirrored in the winery. We use only potassium metabisulfite and citric acid for sanitation, avoiding harsh chemicals. We also steer clear of additives and agents in our wine, maintaining acidity and cleanliness so that problems don’t develop that

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have to be “fixed” with chemicals. Through these measures, we focus on both healthy surroundings and healthy products.

In fact, our winery building itself was built on these same values. Using ICF (insulated concrete form) construction, we could hold a very stable cellar temperature year-round, allowing us to use less power for cooling. Toward the end of 2017, we were able to install solar panels on the winery roof, greatly increasing our energy efficiency.

It has been encouraging to see the rise in environmental consciousness in our community and state over time, and the ways in which this translated to industry practices. In winegrowing, methods aimed at quality and sustainability have always been closely linked—from preserving soil nutrition and integrity to conserving water, preventing runoff and limiting the use of chemicals. These collective efforts have supported us in translating our personal values into business practices. You have heard all about it in the “spiel”—and hopefully the results show in the product!

### *Included in your shipment:*

#### 2017 Petite Sirah, Estate

Harvest Brix: 25.3    pH: 3.76    TA: 5.36    Alc: 14.5%    RS: 0%    ML: 0%  
Cases: 246    Aging: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak barrels

We are pleased to offer a second round of one of our most spectacular vintages of Petite Sirah. With another year under its belt, this has developed into a wonderfully smooth, balanced wine with loads of lush blackberry and plum notes. It is great on the dinner table, especially with Italian cuisine or grilled meats.

#### 2019 Zinfandel, Herbert Vineyard

Harvest Brix: 25.5    pH: 3.59    TA: 5.74    Alc: 15.0%    RS: 0%    ML: 0%  
Cases: 207    Aging: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak barrels

Our new vintage of Zin has finally turned a corner and shown that it is ready to release! It has the raspberry fruit and anise spice we love in a Herbert Zin, although it can still benefit from some breathing time upon opening. It particularly opens up with food, so enjoy this with BBQ spices, pork roast, or a steaming bowl of chili.

#### 2018 Shiraz, Estate

Harvest Brix: 25.5    pH: 3.86    TA: 6.48    Alc: 15.0%    RS: 0%    ML: 0%  
Cases: 136    Barrel age: 3 years in mostly neutral European oak barrels

The new vintage of our Estate Shiraz demonstrates the graceful maturation of our vineyard. The characteristics we love about Shiraz are flourishing. With velvety tannins, perfumy notes of blueberries, pronounced pepper spice and hints of tobacco and leather, this vintage reminds us of our early Monterey Shirazes.

**NOTE: Ambassadors of Oenos receive a half-allotment of 2010 Library Shiraz, and Professional Winos receive a half-allotment of 2011 Library Shiraz.**