



# Merry Monks

## Wine Club of Cantiga Wineworks



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## Diversity in the Foothills

The Sierra Foothills are brimming with nature. A stunning array of wildlife inhabits our beautiful, geographically varied region. For example, we're constantly amazed at the number of bird species that we see on our property; our favorite is a great blue heron that uses our vineyard as a hunting ground. But we seem to have every size and shape, from redtail hawks and a variety of owls, right down to a colorful spectrum of hummingbirds.

No less diverse is our area's viticulture. We are blessed with an abundance of varieties of *vitis vinifera*—the wine grape. We have our unique terrain and climate to thank for this. Our rolling hills and shaded canyons create the complexities of microclimates, and our high altitude brings cool nights to balance warm days. As a result, we can grow an unusually broad spectrum of grape varieties originating from places with diverse climates. On hotter, south-facing hillsides you can find heat-loving grapes such as Spanish Tempranillo and Italian Sangiovese, while on the higher ridges you'll find a range of cooler options, such as Sauvignon Blanc. In fact, El Dorado County alone grows no less than 76 varieties!

This quarter's shipment highlights some of the diversity of our growing region. You'll get to enjoy a white Bordeaux, a Rhone-style blend, and an Italian red—a rare "Library" wine. We hope you enjoy the diversity of this quarter's offerings—perhaps with food from their countries of origin!

### In this shipment:

#### 2018 Semillon, Estate (New Release)

Harvest Brix: 22.0      pH: 3.47      TA: 6.34      Alc: 13.5%      RS: 0%      ML: 0%  
Cases produced: 178      Barrel age: 2 years, half in stainless & half in European oak

Our gorgeous new 2018 vintage of our estate white is now available! This white Bordeaux variety grows exceedingly well in our region, although it is not widely planted in the Foothills. Ours is planted on a south-eastern facing slope with excellent air flow. Although Bordeaux's climate is slightly cooler than ours, our breezes and night cooling seem to keep this grape happy. Our Estate Semillon has become known for its lush apricot and apple characteristics, and its complex, medium body. The fact that we ferment it to dry (0% residual sugar) makes it very versatile with food. It is our favorite wine with sushi, and it is also excellent with salmon, lobster, scallops, and most piquant Mexican and Spanish dishes. We recently offered it as a special with our house-made *salmorejo* (whipped & chilled tomato soup from southern Spain), and it was outstanding!

### 2018 GSM, Sierra Foothills (Club Pre-Release)

Harvest Brix: 25.8      pH: 3.75      TA: 4.10      Alc: 15.0%      RS: 0.0%      ML: 0%  
Cases produced: 269      Barrel age: 2 years in mostly neutral European oak

Our GSM is our Rhone-style red blend (50% Grenache / 25% Syrah / 25% Mourvedre), and one of Christine's favorites. The grape varieties in this blend originate from the southern Rhone Valley (south of France), which has a Mediterranean-influenced climate. We get our grapes for this blend mostly from the Shenandoah Valley of Amador County, which has a similar climate. (The Syrah comes from El Dorado.) This lush, elegant wine balances beautifully with rich, flavorful dishes; it pairs equally well with hearty stews such as French cassoulet, wild game, and rich, fatty meats like duck. It also shines with Mexican food and other Hispanic cuisines, not to mention BBQ. Bright and fruit-forward in its youth, its tannins, spice and abundant fruit allow it to acquire wonderful depth with age.

### 2014 Barbera, Cooper Vineyard (Library)\*

Harvest Brix: 25.8      pH: 3.56      TA: 7.36      Alc: 14.7%      RS: 0%      ML: 0%  
Cases produced: 217      Barrel age: 2 years in mostly neutral European oak

We are pleased to offer up to three "Library" vintages of our Cooper Vineyard Barbera—depending on your club level. The grapes for this much-loved Italian variety come from the Mediterranean-like climate of the Shenandoah Valley, Amador County. Barbera is a bright, medium bodied red with pomegranate fruit characteristics and a rose floral component. It is fantastic with Italian cuisine—the acidity of the wine aligns well with tomato-based sauces. Salty olives and cured meats provide a wonderful complement. Our Library vintages show wonderful depth and complexity; these are great wines for aging with good, stable cellar conditions.

#### \*LIBRARY BARBERA OFFERINGS:

Cellar Groupies: 2014 vintage

Professional Winos: a bottle each of the 2013 and 2014 vintages

Ambassadors of Oenos: a bottle each of 2013 and 2015, and two bottles of 2014

*These releases are extremely limited, and add-on requests are only available for the 2015 vintage at this point.*