



2014 MALBEC RED HILLS OF LAKE COUNTY

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Tasting Notes

Plush aromatics of dark plum and forest floor introduce a wine bursting with black cherry, mocha, and a hint of baked ham. On the palate there are hints of porcini mushroom and star anise, with an underlying tone of graphite minerality. Round, well-developed tannins and a plush mouthfeel lead the way to a long, velvety finish.

Age 5-7 years

Vineyards

Amber Knolls Vineyard
Red Hills of Lake County: AVA

Wine Analysis

VARIETAL CONTENT:	100% Malbec
FINISHED ALCOHOL:	14.8%
TOTAL ACIDITY:	0.6mg per 100ml
pH:	3.79
PRODUCTION:	117 cases
RELEASE DATE:	November 2016

Overview

Two mountain ranges removed from the Pacific Ocean, Lake County is generally warmer and dryer than the neighboring counties of Sonoma or Napa. Clear Lake, the largest natural freshwater lake in California, is the heart and soul of the Lake County wine region and is responsible for creating a specialized "lake effect" by compressing temperature extremes in nearby vineyards.

The Red Hills Lake County AVA is situated entirely within the Clear Lake AVA and at the foot of the dormant volcano Mount Konocti. The rolling terrain of this micro-region contains a thin veil of red volcanic soil above a deep layer of fractured obsidian, striking a dramatic counterpoint to the wider valleys and higher elevations of Lake County's other areas.

Grapes were harvested from Amber Knolls Vineyard where the textbook conditions of 2,200-foot elevations, signature volcanic soil and a warm, dry climate were matched with Malbec Clone 4 on 110R rootstock in 2001. This 19-acre "all-star" planting produces small early-maturing vines that transform stress resulting from minimal irrigation into small berries and loose clusters with favorable high skin-to-juice ratios and advanced flavor development.

Growing Season

In early 2014, most California winemakers fretted over the possibility of a third consecutive drought year, but ultimately celebrated an outstanding vintage. January brought dry, seasonable temperatures and February saw one storm but the relief was short-lived. Budbreak in March was up to three weeks early while a cool April throttled growth. Bloom in May and berry set in June were favorable as conditions remained warm, clear, and accelerated. Veraison, the onset of ripening, occurred in mid-July; early August was quite warm, but a return to cooler temperatures slowed development and allowed the formation of deep colors and flavors. The early harvest had average-sized yields, but the consistent weather produced stellar wines despite the drought.

Winemaking

- Hand harvested in the early morning cool of September 17, 2014
- Four days of cold soaking to enhance color and aromatics
- Fourteen days of whole-berry fermentation in one open-top stainless steel tank
- The cap was punched down by hand two to three times daily for maximum flavor extraction
- Aged for seventeen months in French oak barrels (80% new)
- Racked twice to promote flavor development and help soften tannins
- Final blend determined by a judicious barrel selection



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ALC. 14.8% BY VOL.