



# IDLEWILD

## Wines

### *2017 The Bird, Flora and Fauna Red*

#### *Vineyard*

Flora and Fauna loosely means the collection of plant and animal life of a certain epoch. In my version, it is the collection of varietals from the cellar that make up the blend for the year. For 2017, The Bird is comprised of roughly 60% Dolcetto, 35% Barbera, and 5% Nebbiolo. While the wine is designated as Mendocino County, the fruit in fact comes from Fox Hill Vineyard. Located southeast of Ukiah on Mendocino's Talmage Bench, the soils are well drained with high concentrations of gravel and sandstone. In contrast to the varietal bottling of these wines, these grapes are from sections of the vineyard that yield softer structure and are handled with this early to bottle style in mind.

#### *Vintage*

Rain! Lots and lots of rain! After five years of drought, it felt nearly surreal to see rivers flooding over their banks and lakes filling to their brims. We experienced a wet Winter, a normal budbreak, and quite a normal (albeit wet) Spring. Everything kept rolling along smoothly all through summer, and despite the intense heat, the canopies were lush and provided plenty of shade and cooling. Right as things seemed perfectly on track, a late summer heat spike set in across the North Coast, and the game suddenly changed. A month of harvest was compressed into a week. This intense home stretch had me worried, but the vineyard held on beautifully. For those who picked fast and furiously and are working with varieties that can handle some heat, it is a gorgeous vintage... full flavors, plenty of acid (if you acted fast), and a generous mix of high and low tones in terms of spectrum.

#### *Winemaking*

All of these varieties have structure and at the same time a joyous side. The focus in fermentation was to build enough structure for a very versatile food wine but also to emphasize the exuberant and delicious elements of each grape. To do this, the wines were left largely whole cluster and all fermentations started with carbonic maceration. That being said, none of them were pushed to be fully carbonic wines. Instead, the initial lift in aromatics and push on frothy fresh fruits was achieved, and then I fully treading the wines to allow fermentation to switch to a more standard flow. This gave a backbone and savory qualities to act as bass notes to the carbonic high tones. All of the wines were pressed a touch early to ensure that that tannic structure was appropriate for a shorter time in barrel, just four months in neutral oak.

#### *Wine*

In Italy, the house wine is often light, fresh, aromatic, and firmly structured so as to pair beautifully next to a wide range of foods. That is the inspiration for The Bird. Black cherries, wild strawberries, dried herbs, dried roses, fresh soil, and a touch of orange peel make up the aromatic profile. The mouth feel is a joyful interplay of brightness with just enough chewy bass notes before the seriousness kicks in with a firm acid and tannin balance on the finish.

