

# IDLEWILD

## 2018 Flora & Fauna Red Wine, Mendocino

### *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 2018, the blend is comprised of roughly 48% Barbera, 39% Dolcetto, and 13% Nebbiolo. The fruit mostly comes from Fox Hill Vineyard, which is located southeast of Ukiah on Mendocino's Talmage Bench with well drained soils with high concentrations of gravel and sandstone. Additional fruit comes from Wild Ruth Ranch in Yorkville Highlands, where the high elevation and schist veined sandstone offer more tension and vibrancy. 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*

2018 was a dream vintage. There just aren't many other ways to say it. There weren't any surprises or issues, and the cadence of the season was easy. While the summer months were quite warm, the fall was borderline cool. This all translates to the most balanced fruit seen in years. The vintage did extend quite a long time due to the cool fall, but for those of us who favor both high acidity and depth of flavor, there couldn't have been a better scenario.

### *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, and firmly structured so as to pair beautifully next to a wide range of foods, and that is the inspiration for this blend. This is my favorite rendition of this blend yet: all the notes seem to be heightened, including the balance. Dark cherry, fresh soil, dried herbs, violets, and graphite are highlights of the aromas. 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.

13.4% alc by vol.