



## EARLY MOUNTAIN

### 2018 Shenandoah Valley Cabernet Franc

*At the foot of Virginia's Blue Ridge Mountains, nature is at once graceful and fierce. Early Mountain wines are made here through a combination of ingenuity and true grit. We gently tend to every vine so the wine that emerges from the cellar is a clear descendant of the fruit at harvest — a unique wine that respects its heritage while embracing evolution and adventure. Virginian through and through.*

**Variety:** 100% Cabernet Franc

**Winemaker Note:** In 2018, we elected to make only two Cabernet Francs: our regional bottlings, using fruit that would have been in the vineyard specific Cab Francs to fill out the wines. Both the Madison County and Shenandoah Valley bottlings shifted stylistically to reflect our pivot to meet the conditions of the 2018 vintage. We realized we had the raw material to make lighter, fresher wines, and to push it any further would result in imbalance and caricature. We elected to bring in the fruit earlier and more fresh and proceeded to ferment at cooler temperatures, practice softer extraction, and press earlier to retain fruit and preference a softer mouth feel. We carried this gentle touch through aging in barrel and bottled earlier to capture the freshness and charm that is the hallmark of this vintage. The Shenandoah Valley performed as well or better than most vineyards in northern and central Virginia, and we were happy to be working with the fruit from these two sites in Timberville and Mauertown. We are excited to offer the 2018 Shenandoah Valley Cabernet Franc as an expression of this vintage and our creativity in a region where every year is different..

**Wine description:** We like to say our approach to Cabernet Franc is more Burgundy than Bordeaux, meaning we look for silky rather than tannic structure and favor the aromatic potential of the grape over the flavor of the barrel. In 2018, we used this approach on all of our red wines, in most cases pushing the wines further to the fresh side of the spectrum. Because of more favorable weather conditions, this wine shows a bit more density than would be expected, but it will always be the most delicate of the trio of vintages from 2017 to 2019. The aromas are a mingling of bright red cherry with white pepper and forest mushrooms. The fruit/savory play continues on the palate, which is medium bodied with subtle tannins and delicate acidity. The wine manages a graceful stance while also having detail and depth.

**Food pairing:** Works beautifully with traditional Cab Franc pairings of roast lamb and fuller flavor meats, but with its silken texture and savory notes it also bridges to lighter dishes with umami notes.

**Cellaring:** This wine has already entered its drinking window and should continue to develop over the next two to five years.

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**In the Vineyard:** The 2018 vintage was an eventful one! Early springtime warmth resulted in no major frost event. Rainfall during bloom created lighter and looser clusters, which became helpful later in the season. On a whole, fruit-set was light, both from bloom-time weather and vines naturally balancing themselves from higher yields in 2017, a factor that assisted ripening through the summer. Spring and summer of 2018 were the wettest on record though the rains tended to drive in short bursts and vineyards with well-drained soils were able to respond well through the deluge. Heat events in July and August drove ripeness and the lighter sets that were a concern in the spring helped drive earlier ripening and healthy clusters, a benefit given the harvest rain. Our lighter style reds were harvested in late August, with freshness and a good level of quality.

**Vineyard Block:** Shenandoah Springs Vineyard, Baer Ridge Vineyard

**Clone/Rootstock:** Cab Franc 214, 3309

**Technical:** Cases produced: 135 Bottled: May 16, 2019

Yeast: Ambient Alcohol:

pH: 3.76 TA: 4.13 g/L RS: Dry, 0.15 g/L