



## EARLY MOUNTAIN

### 2021 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 2021, we build on the strategy we started in 2017 of delineating our Cabernet Francs by the multiple places they are grown, with three vineyard specific wines and two regional blends. Both the Madison County and Shenandoah Valley bottlings reflect the ping pong character of the last four vintages, with 2021 balancing the intensity and power of the hot, dry 2019 vintage with the classic style of the cooler 2020. Though we talk about the regional bottlings as being lighter in style in our normal vintages, we stand by our commitment to not only embrace place, but also vintage; this is Virginia after all, and we have different conditions every year. We want to celebrate this, instead of forcing the wines to act the same every time. The Shenandoah Valley, in particular, had a long season and this wine was made with two vineyard picks, one in the middle of harvest, in the transition, and one later and riper. In particular the north valley vineyard near Woodstock is bringing serious depth and concentration, while the Timberville vineyard balances and contributes aromatically. We are excited to offer the 2021 Shenandoah Valley Cabernet Franc as an expression of this vintage and region.

**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 2010, this was as true as it ever was. While the flavors are definitely Cabernet Franc, this texture is reminiscent of Pinot Noir, and you can see why we believe this grape does best as a varietal wine when it is unencumbered by new oak and long aging. The result is a wine that is both graceful in stature and compelling in detail, walking a fine line between subtlety and complexity. The aromas are a mingling of red and black fruits with rosemary, forest mushrooms and black pepper. The fruit/savory play continues on the palate, which is rich with persistent, ripe tannins and subtle acidity. This wine demands that you both engage its aromatic offering and pour yourself another glass.

**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:** *In the lively spirit of Virginia, 2021 was an exciting vintage for Early Mountain. It very much reflects the impact of site, with regions throughout the state experiencing highly varying climatic events, greatly influencing the dynamic range in fruit attributes.*

*Early spring, we gratefully saw few frost events, escaping significant fruit damage. Despite some early season rains, bloom-time in the vineyard was quite dry, allowing for a good fruit set. With warm daytime temperatures throughout most of the growing season, we saw high and even ripening throughout both Quaker Run and Early Mountain vineyards. The late season rains, leading to harvest were also accompanied by notable drying (this was doubly obvious when*

*tending to our new plantings, which need water!). Overall, despite harvest-time rainfall, we could not have asked for a better result.*

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

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

**Technical:** Cases produced: 251 Bottled: 7/6/22

Yeast: Ambient Alcohol: 13.6%

pH: 3.79

TA: 4.7 g/L

RS: Dry, 0.17 g/L