



# Cima Collina

## HELLER MERLOT / CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2017

— Organically Farmed —

### APPELLATION

Carmel Valley

### VINEYARD DESIGNATION

Heller Vineyard

### VARIETALS

54% Merlot  
46% Cabernet Sauvignon

### AGING

19 months  
8 % new American Oak  
54% new French Oak

### ALCOHOL

14.8%

### BOTTLED

July 25, 2019

### PRODUCTION

327 cases

### WINEMAKER

Annette Hoff

### SUGG. RETAIL PRICE

\$46

**VINEYARD NOTES** – In 2017 I had the opportunity to purchase fruit from this historic vineyard. It has been farmed organically since the first vines were planted in the mid-1970's. I've come to understand that the climate of Upper Carmel Valley (aka Cachagua) is a peculiar one in California. It has a reputation for being hot in the summer but most do not understand the other extremes of the climate there. Cachagua Valley is about 900-1100 feet in altitude but is surrounded by the coastal mountains that rise steeply all around it to 2000+ feet creating a bowl and cold sink in the winter. Summer temperatures can reach over 100 degrees F but can also decrease sharply to lows in the mid-40's to 50's at night. Wintertime can be cold -- many times lows into the low 20's or even less and the growing season can be short -- Cachagua can experience frost as early as September and as late as the beginning of June. This can make for a challenging environment in which to grow wine grapes but Bordeaux varietals -- particularly Merlot -- seem to thrive in otherwise challenging conditions.

I'll also admit I'm partial to old vines -- it's an appreciation for plants that have survived and even thrived for multiple decades, pushing their roots further and further down into the soil to discover and then take up the minerals and elements that have remained undisturbed for millenia. It is undeniable that grapes from old vines express their character in nuance and grace, in whispers and hints of nature's wisdom and generosity.

**WINEMAKER NOTES** - Whenever I talk to someone who knows the wines from this property they almost always remark about the Merlot -- "but THAT Merlot!". The Merlot (even more so than the Cabernet) is some of the densest, richest, darkest Merlot I've ever seen. It was a beast in the cellar and needed several rackings and an egg white fining to tame it a bit. The Cabernet was a bit more restrained. Together they make a winning, memorable combination of concentrated deliciousness.

**WINE STYLE** – This wine will age and develop quite well over the next 15 years. I'm blessed to have had the opportunity to make a wine like this (and I had to dust off some of the Bordeaux varietal winemaking tricks I had learned when I was young and making wine long ago in Calistoga). It can't get much better than this.