

GRGICH HILLS ESTATE

NAPA VALLEY



Miljenko's Selection

2020 CRLJENAK KAŠTELANSKI
(SIRL-YEN-ACK KASH-TEL-LAN-SKEE)

ORIGIN: Upon arriving in Napa Valley in 1958, Miljenko “Mike” Grgich was astounded by the many similarities between Zinfandel and Plavac Mali, a grape native to his homeland. He believed they may be the same grape. In 2000, Mike’s contributions to the work of geneticist Carole Meredith and professors in Croatia led to an amazing discovery. Zinfandel’s DNA matches Crljenak Kaštelanski (also known as Tribidrag), a very old, nearly extinct vine from Croatia and the parent of Plavac Mali. This unique wine was made from vines brought over from Croatia to Napa Valley.

WINEMAKER’S NOTES

Alcohol.....14.5% by volume
Fermentation.....indigenous yeast;
stainless steel
Harvest date.....October 2, 2020
Sugar25.4° Brix (average)
Bottling date.....March 17, 2022
Release date.....June 2023
Total acid5.8 g/L
pH3.78
Time in oak18 months
Type of oak.....100% French oak
Production.....169 cases (12/750 ml.)
Blend 85% Crljenak
Kaštelanski
14% Petite Sirah
1% Zinfandel

VINTAGE: 2020 was a challenging but ultimately one of the most rewarding vintages for us. One of the hottest vintages on record with multiple heat waves well over 100 degrees, vintage 2020 was also accompanied by exceptionally low rainfall: 50-60% below average. Despite the heat and drought, our vines were well prepared for the stress. Due to low rainfall in 2020, the vines prepared themselves for drought by producing less leaves, which requires less water. The heat and drought produced exceptionally low yields but with excellent quality – great acid and freshness in white wines, and beautiful concentration and color in the reds.

VINEYARD: We planted a small portion (2 acres) of Miljenko's Vineyard (34 acres) with Crljenak Kaštelanski as an experiment to see how it would respond to the climate and soils of Calistoga. The vines reacted positively to the vineyard's northeast exposure which catches abundant morning sun and is protected from the hot, late afternoon sun. Combined with the vineyard's gravelly loam soil, we found that this location was the perfect spot to grow this varietal. We farm our vineyards naturally, using the principles of regenerative agriculture, and they are certified organic.

THE WINE: Crljenak Kaštelanski, the original Zinfandel, opens with aromas of cranberry, blood orange, plums, blackberry and hints of currant, pepper, tobacco, and dried morels. The taste is fruit forward, featuring mixed berries and blood orange supported by a lively, fresh acidity followed by complex undertones of cinnamon spices and herbs. Delicious with grilled meats and herb crusted flat bread.