

HL

HERB LAMB VINEYARDS

Vertical Tasting: 2006-2014 HL Vineyards Cabernet Sauvignon



These vintages all have their own story to tell, and, like children in the same family, each has an underlying similarity while still being very different. These wines show the effects of this north-east facing hillside vineyard planted on volcanic ash and rock, which gets more late afternoon shadow than sun during the long growing season forcing us to wait until mid-October normally to get fully ripened fruit. There is a hallmark character of red fruits, menthol and blueberries throughout, yet an elegance and great structure. According to winemaker Michael Trujillo, "this fruit rolls with Mother Nature more than any vineyard that I have ever worked with."

From a production standpoint, we are so lucky to have had the same winemaking and viticulture team all of these vintages, and their ability to know the rows of the vineyards that gives us the best fruit and control the outcome in the winery.

2006 This was a cooler vintage from grapes that were picked a little later, giving us wines with a little higher acids. Leathery and cigar box notes with lingering fruit and spice are pushed to the back of the palate, but give way to the brightness and freshness of the fruit. There is a great structure to this wine. The fruit is briny/savory/very French style but without the Brett. Licorice, soy, herbs and smoked weeds show in the palate. It is plush, sleek and sexy but still has the structure to go several more years. Should be great with a big ribeye with lots of fat – drink now through the next 2 years.

2007 Plusher than 2006 and with a bit more oak and fruit on the nose, the 2007 HL still shines and is perfectly balanced. It shows savory, fruity, soy, luscious cranberry and bright black cherry fruit. 2007 was a warmer season, which gave us fleshier wines with more body and great acid that should pair beautifully with a leg or rack of lamb. Enjoy now through the next few years.

2008 This was another cooler vintage, and longer hang time gave us higher pH and lower acids which make the 2008 vintage very approachable. We thought the vintage might implode because of the vintage conditions, but the wine has more structure than we all anticipated. It shows a nose of chocolate, cassis, dried cherry and herbs. The lower acid makes it a little decadent and fatter in the mouth. There is a chalkiness and dried red fruit character from the extended ripeness of the vintage. Decant and enjoy now through 2019.

2009 Still a little closed in the nose, this wine is wound up a bit and sleeping. It has lots of red fruit, dried cherries, cranberries and fresh acidity in the palate. It is slow to open up with a dusty, woody element of pencil lead, mocha and allspice. It should follow in the footsteps of the 2006 and roll out as soon as it



ages a bit more. The acid should hold up and it will become a wonderful accompaniment to rich food. This vintage should easily age until 2020.

2010 This wine has an interesting sweet herbal character in the nose, like rosemary and chocolate malt balls. From a cooler, less ripe vintage, it shows stickier tannins and a more muscular base. In the nose are cedar and woody notes like chaparral and earthy, pine forest floor. This vintage may never evolve as much as warmer vintages do, or get any sexier, but it is still a great food wine and should go another 4-5 years.

2011 There was a lot more hype about this being a horrible year than the reality of wines that were produced. This wine has a very feminine personality; it is lighter and prettier than complex, with floral and herbal characteristics and very Bordeaux-ish. In the mouth there are violets and bright, black currants, red cherry and spice. It has more Cabernet Franc components and flavors as opposed to rich Cabernet fruit. It is evolving and will be a great food wine with 4-5 more years in the bottle. Winemakers who knew what they were doing in

leaner years were very successful in still making great wines that are reflective of the terroir and weather.

2012 This was the first of a string of lovely, balanced, warm growing seasons, mostly due to earlier ripening and warmer growing seasons brought on by the drought. As with all vintages from this vineyard, there is a typical blueberry, menthol, and dried red fruit character with red fruits like cranberry and red plums in the mouth. Even with all the rich fruit in this wine, 2012 is not as plush as some later vintages but should age beautifully another 6-10 years.

2013 A very warm vintage, the 2013 gave us an old world, rustic character. On the nose there is a woody note of chestnut combined with sweet red fruits. In the mouth, you find cranberry, cherry, dried blueberry and spices of Mexican chocolate. The dense black cherry pie and dusty coca flavors are highlighted by a wealth of caramel, cinnamon and spice flavors, making it very rich in the mouth with an added depth and extraction, not seen in other vintages.

2014 HL Vineyards Barrel sample – This wine is more floral and youthful with a lot of fresh, primary fruit characteristics. Flavors of blueberry, herbal notes, violets and dried red fruits shine in the palate. This should be an ideal wine for the cellar, focusing on fruit and balance. Will be bottle in the summer of 2016.

2014 *HL Reserve* (Barrel sample) — 2% of the 2015 barrel fermented *HL Vineyards* wine was added to a selection of our best barrels chosen from the 2014 vintage to create our first ever Reserve wine. This wine shows a combination of toasty, graham cracker crust, floral, licorice, brioche, violet, red fruit and blueberry flavors. It is complex and has great structure and depth. Will be bottle in the summer of 2016.

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