

Making Its *Mark*

NOBLE VINES
COLLECTION
CRAFTS A NEW
RED BLEND, THE
MARQUIS RED

by Courtney Schiessl

Pop quiz: What are the three most popular wine categories in the U.S.? It isn't too difficult to guess the top two—Chardonnay and Cabernet Sauvignon—but the third may surprise you. Rather than a varietal wine, it's the red blend, a style whose growth has been steadily increasing over the past five years.

That's why one of California's top producers of reliable and affordable varietal wines is mixing things up a bit itself: In August, Noble Vines Collection added a new red blend to its portfolio. Now available nationwide, the 2017 Marquis Red is sure to be the new go-to for red-blend lovers across the U.S.

Noble Origins

A part of fourth-generation family-owned wine company Delicato Family Wines, Noble Vines Collection specializes in varietal wines for everyday drinking. The range is crafted not just from international varieties—Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay,



Pinot Noir, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, and Pinot Grigio—but from specific clones of these grapes, ones that proved themselves over time to stand out above the rest as they traveled from their French homes to sunny California plots.

“We take the best of these noble vine stocks and cultivate them in California to craft wines of substance and character,” says Andrew Blok, Portfolio Director at Delicato Family Wines. Each Noble Vines wine is labeled with the number of the specific vine clone from which it is made.

The Marquis Red is also crafted from these prized grapes. Its name alludes to the nobility who historically owned many of the most esteemed vines in France. The current vintage contains Syrah, Merlot, and Cabernet Sauvignon grown in California’s warm inland valleys; they’re blended together to create a harmonious, accessible red and then aged in both American and French oak to add complexity and richness. The result is smooth, full, and fruit forward, with plentiful notes of dark cherry, cinnamon, nutmeg, and vanilla.

A Modern Approach

The wine’s character reflects the philosophy behind the Noble Vines Collection, says Blok: “We’re drawing on a noble French heritage of grape growing and blending while crafting wine that’s attuned to the contemporary palate.” That approach sounds like a smart bet. According to Nielsen data, red blends remain on an upward trajectory, commanding 11% of the market share in 2018. Consumers love them for their smooth textures and generous flavors, and winemakers love them for their flexibility; in Noble Vines Collection’s case, it can take advantage of vineyards and varieties across California to craft a wine of consistent style and quality year after year.

At a suggested retail price of just \$15, the juicy, lush Marquis Red is the latest in a long line of noble wines that remain affordable for everyone. ■■

