

Yount Ridge and its Four Inaugural Releases

By fredswan@norcalwine.com. Published on January 29, 2018.

NorCal Wine



Yount Ridge is a fairly new label, but one with great pedigree. Though labeled Napa Valley, the wines are all estate from a vineyard which lies in Oakville, next to Cardinale and almost exactly at the midpoint of Napa Valley. Celia Welch is the winemaker. Her other projects have included Corra, Scarecrow, J. Davies, Hollywood and Vine, Kelly Fleming, and Staglin.

There are 25 acres to the Yount Ridge vineyard, which is farmed organically. It includes Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, and Merlot. The vines are about ten years old now and, prior to the establishment of Yount Ridge as a commercial label, their fruit was sold to other wineries, including Melka for Entré Nous. Celia Welch was also familiar with the vineyard, having used it for some other clients.

There are currently four wines in the Yount Ridge lineup. I tasted them all in late November and found them to be quite good and very representative of their AVA. They are now available at many restaurants, several fine wine shops, and direct from the winery.

2016 Yount Ridge Sauvignon Blanc, Napa Valley 91 14.2% 750ml \$38

The nose on this wine is lovely, brimming with nectarine, lemon-lime, sweet tropical fruit and flowers. Those notes are on the palate too, harmonious but with great intensity and a touch of spice. There's a very fine, attractive texture in the mouth, probably from lees stirring. The finish is very long with a just a touch of warmth.

This wine is 100% Sauvignon Blanc, but one-third of the fruit is of the Musqué clone which contributes much of the floral notes. The juice was barrel fermented, then aged an six months sur lie in the barrels.

2014 Yount Ridge Proprietary Red Blend 91+ 14.7% 750ml \$98

The inaugural red blend from Yount Ridge is serious, yet immediately charismatic, with sweet, pretty fruit on the nose. It's virtually overflowing with aromas of deep red cherry, black currant, spice and vanilla. The palate is a generous medium in body and, given the ebullient nose, surprisingly elegant. Fine, dry tannins add structure and there's notable acidity as well. The flavors focus on dark fruit and spice. (66% Cabernet Sauvignon, 24% Merlot, 10% Malbec)

2014 Yount Ridge Cabernet Sauvignon 91 14.7% 750ml \$98

Nicely ripe black berry and other dark fruits are accented by spice on the nose. The palate is black-fruited as well, yet dark spices and oak predominate for now. Body is medium-plus with loads of firm, fine-grained tannins and a lengthy finish. This wine will thrive with a few years of bottle age. Enjoy it from 2020 on. (2.5% Malbec, 0.5% Merlot)

2014 Yount Ridge *Epic* Napa Valley 92+ 14.7% 750ml \$240

Epic is the flagship wine of Yount Ridge and 100% varietal, aged 20 months in 70% new French oak. It's a powerfully aromatic wine, showing black cherry, tangy red cherry, spice, violets and sweet oak. Full-bodied in the mouth with a wealth of firm, grainy texture. Refreshing acidity provides a counterpoint to the rich fruit and tannins. Flavors are consistent with the nose and fruit-centric. The lengthy finish also reveals coconut. Epic is very structured now, but built for age with the combination of generous fruit and acidity. Best from 2022 through 2035.