

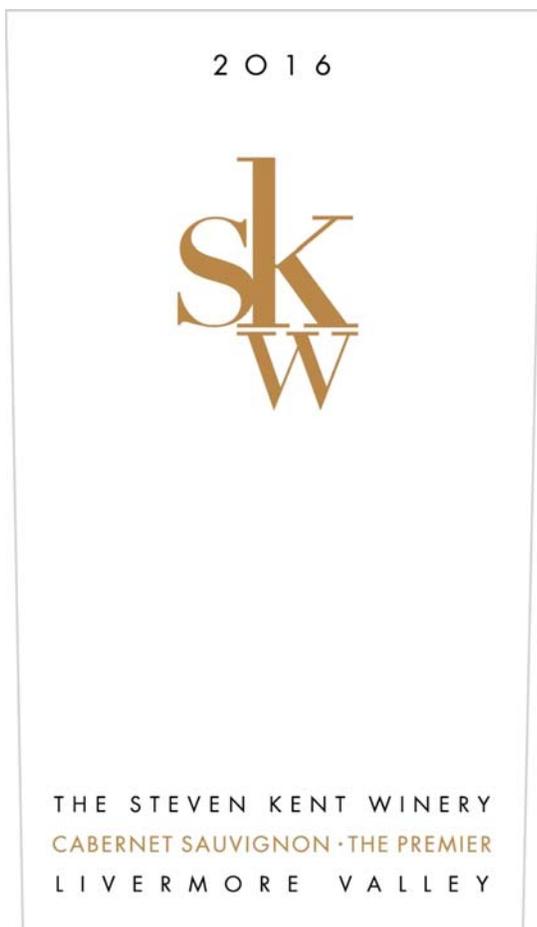


THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

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THE PREMIER CABERNET SAUVIGNON — 2016 LIVERMORE VALLEY



VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

100% Cabernet Sauvignon: 66% Ghilmetti Estate Vineyard and 34% Home Ranch Vineyard. These two sites, separated by 3.4 miles, lay on a nine-mile axis of world-class quality cutting through the heart of Livermore Valley wine country.

HARVEST DATA

September 23-October 11, 2016 | pH 3.60 | TA 0.59 | Alcohol 14.3%

FERMENTATION

Cold soaked for 5-7 days, individual fermenters inoculated with the D254 and D-21, and D-80 yeast strains. Extended maceration of 14-21 days.

COOPERAGE

Aged for 24 months in mostly new French oak barrels. Primary cooperages were Le Grand, Taransaud, and François Frères.

CASES PRODUCED

281 six-packs

RELEASE DATE

May 18, 2019

HARVEST NOTES

The 2016 vintage started life, for the first time in several years, with significant winter rainfall (Livermore saw rainfall in January 2016 exceed that of January 2015 by 243%). Helping to recharge aquifers and wells, rainfall was also helpful in leaching out some of the dissolved solids that had accumulated during the drought. Bud-break and bloom occurred in temperate weather, and the season continued in a fairly typical Livermore Valley fashion: dry and warm through to harvest. The trend of significantly earlier harvests stopped in 2016 as we picked our first fruit one day later than the previous year. 2016 was a uniformly excellent year for fruit quality and yield. I believe this vintage will rival 2014 in excellence.

WINEMAKER NOTES

The Premier Cabernet Sauvignon represents the finest assemblage of Cabernet in the vintage from the vineyards sites we farm and with which we work. While the wine is always 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, the final blend is a careful consideration of quality and balance regardless of site and clone and differs vintage to vintage depending upon the magic and vagaries of the vintage. The Livermore Valley has a long and glorious history; though, far less time highlighting what, in my mind, it grows as well as any region in the world: the Cabernet family of grapes. The Premier — since its inception in 2009 — is our effort to show just how magnificent this grape can be when the vineyards are farmed meticulously and when a certain winemaking philosophy that embodies balance and pace and freshness of fruit is brought to bear. In 2016 we harvested Cabernet from three vineyards and eventually sorted through more than 100 barrels of wine to pick the final 6: each of which was magnificent on its own, and more importantly, even better as part of a blend. Each lot of wine was fermented separately in 1.7 ton open-top fermenters, went through a period of extended maceration that was appropriate for the site and the year, barreled down separately, then blended and rebarreled about a year before release. Interestingly enough, even as we are prizing more and more the nuances of used wood, most of the barrels that were chosen for this offering were new. 100% French oak is used; the wine was aged about 24 months before bottling.

TASTING NOTES

The Premier 2016 is a wine of structure. Somewhat shy aromatically (with aeration, showing notes of dark berry, bay, sage) in its youth, one can expect a fuller array of herb and fruit to develop with time. On entry, unlike the previous vintage which was fairly lean, this wine shows abundant warm fruit flavors and significant tannin and acid structure. The Steven Kent style is very evident in the mid-palate of this wine: though tight and big and tannic, it still shows a lovely pace — an acid-driven characteristic that embodies freshness, balance, and the ability to pair wonderfully with food. One needs to go back to the 2013 vintage to find this wine's equal in overall richness, and even then, the 2016 shows a bit more focused structure and, perhaps, the ability to age. From the standpoint of flavor, this wine shows gorgeous notes of dark fruit, savory herb, pencil lead, and a very subtle mushroom-tinged forest-floor quality that is very beguiling. The finish is lengthy, focused, slightly redder in fruit than the mid, displaying that great acidity upon which the wine's flavors ride for minutes. Like all other vintages of the Premier, this wine was made with a deftness and structure that will reward medium to long-term aging. Stored properly, the 2016 Premier Cabernet Sauvignon should evolve beautifully for 10-15 years, and we believe it to showcase a vision for Cabernet Sauvignon that is in keeping with the world-class potential of the Livermore Valley.