

# JONATA

## 2017 FENIX MERLOT

BALLARD CANYON, SANTA YNEZ VALLEY

40% Merlot, 32% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Cabernet Franc, 8% Petit Verdot  
630 Cases Produced

RUBEN SOLÓRZANO  
*Vineyard Manager*

MATT DEES  
*Winemaker*

DREW PICKERING  
*Assistant Winemaker*

## VINTAGE RUMINATIONS

A wet winter finally broke the drought in 2017. The rain was a blessing as it refreshed our soils and water quality. Conditions were peaceful and warm during budbreak and early spring. However, the cool conditions during flowering prolonged the process, led to very small clusters and resulted in miniscule yields. In many cases, we saw roughly 50% of our normal yields. It was certainly a year with some of the smallest yields and earliest harvest dates for us (with a few of the first picks coming in mid-August).

We experienced great growing conditions in June and July before a suddenly cool August. The weather changed radically again in late August and early September with heat spikes and rain events starting Labor Day and continuing to September 10th. There were also unusually humid conditions for the first half of September, but miraculously the rain skipped over our vineyards. We were able to harvest some fruit prior to the warm periods that graced our blends with freshness and structural integrity. We also harvest selected blocks after the heat had passed, giving wines with density and power. The combination of these characteristics resulted in wines of purity, balance and complexity. — Matt Dees Winemaker

## ON THE WINE

Heady and perfumed with an intoxicating nose that immediately pulls you in with notes of ripe black fruit, almond brioche and violets. New leather, cracked peppercorns and blackberry preserves. Espresso beans. Generous and luxurious fruit saturates the palate. A wine of breadth and power that also boasts a truly silky texture. Stays buoyant and lively through the finish. To my palate this represents the most complete and compelling Fenix to date. So compelling that it is difficult to not drink this wine today. Decadent today, but also poised for further development and blossoming in the cellar. — Matt Dees Winemaker

## ACCOLADES

**95 POINTS** Antonio Galloni *Vinous* September 2019

**95 POINTS** Jeb Dunnuck *jebdunnuck.com* October 2019