



2020

## INAUGURAL RELEASE

100% MERLOT

BLOCK: 8 :: CLONE: 181

DEGRADED TUFA TO SANDY LOAM SOILS

HILLSIDE SLOPE :: 800 FEET

EAST SIDE SLOPE, WEST/NORTHWEST FACING

2020 VINTAGE

14.8% ALCOHOL :: 3 BARRELS

WINEMAKER: JULIEN FAYARD

# BRION

## MERLOT

ECOTONE VINEYARD

NAPA VALLEY

Located in an “ecotone” between valley and mountain, as the name implies, this vineyard occupies one of those middle zones that are proving to be the best vineyards in Napa, and not just historically. With each Napa Valley vintage, wines from these places are showing up as superior in all respects, not only among their peers but amongst all the wines of the world.

In 2019, the first year of working with the fruit from this vineyard, the Merlot came in ahead of the Cabernet, as is usual for the variety. What stood out was that the grape clusters were perfectly immaculate. Going through crush, the must of those couple of tons was so compelling, a small amount intended for a Bordeaux-style red blend was reserved to bottle on its own. When this happened again the following harvest, it was decided to bottle enough to make 2020 the inaugural release.

As winemaker Julien Fayard notes, Ecotone produces wine of great character and intensity. While warm and well-exposed to the sun during the day, the site offers an acidity from the altitude’s fresher nights and the addition of the minerality from the soil, which is heavy with rock content and decidedly volcanic.

The 2020 Ecotone Merlot is rich and textured, offering sweet aromatics from its lushly ripe, dark fruit. The wine opens with sun-ripened strawberry followed by additional layers of texture and firm, fully-integrated tannins. The wine was aged in 100% new French oak for 20 months and bottled unfiltered.

**ECOTONE:** from “ecology” or “ecos” (Greek: house, dwelling, singular place) plus “tone” (from “tonos,” Greek: tension), Ecotone is a region of transition between two biological communities, sometimes forming an area of new and distinct qualities, often accompanied by increased diversity and abundance that are more than the sum of the neighboring zones.

—[brionwines.com](http://brionwines.com)—