In 2017, generous rainfall returned following the 5-year drought in California. Budbreak occurred by the first week of April followed by bloom in the middle of May. Crop set was average at best, with overall yields under 3 tons per acre for our Hilltop blocks. An extreme heat event occurred in early September which brought temperatures as high as 115 degrees. Thankfully, our Cabernet crop was several weeks away from harvest and came through the heat spike unharmed. In this vintage, we saw a higher level of sugar and flavor ripeness than had been seen since the string of great vintages from '12 to '14. This new 2017 release also marks the debut of dramatic new packaging for our iconic Vineyard Series tier.

VINEYARDS
Our Hilltop Cabernet Sauvignon is primarily grown at three of J. Lohr’s vineyards in Paso Robles. Approximately 60% is from our Shotwell Vineyard in the El Pomar District. The Beck Vineyard, located at a 1,700 elevation in the Creston District, supplies 25% of the fruit. The balance is from our Gean Ranch in the Adelaida District along with a collection of other small sites in the Paso Robles AVA. Blessed with long summer days of intense sunshine, our near 100°F daytime temperatures are followed by chilly, ocean-cooled nights in the 50s. These Cabernet vines are naturally stressed in the dry, gravelly, and sometimes lime shale-laden soils. Water is at a premium in these vineyards, enabling the viticulturist to fine-tune irrigation, resulting in the darkest possible fruit with resolved tannins year after year.

HARVEST
DATES September 17 through October 23, 2017
PROCESS Select-picked and sorted
CHEMISTRIES Brix 27.2°
total acidity 0.43 g/100ml
pH 3.69
COMPOSITION 95% Cabernet Sauvignon
4% Petit Verdot
1% Malbec

VINIFICATION
YEAST Uvaferm 43 was the yeast of choice for the higher Brix fruit
FERMENTATION Primary fermentation in open-top and conventional stainless steel tanks
TEMPERATURE Peak fermentation at 92°F
MACERATION Less than 6 days on skins for most lots
MALOLACTIC Malolactic complete with Viniflora Oenos

MATURATION
TIME IN BARREL 18 months in 225 liter barrels
BARREL TYPE French oak, thin stave, very tight grain, 70% new
COOPERS Sylvain, St. Martin, Marcel Cadet, Demptos, Nadalie

BOTTLING
ACIDITY pH 3.66
TA 0.64 g/100ml
ALCOHOL 14.9% by volume
BOTTLED May 2019
PRODUCTION 41,400 six-bottle cases

WINE LIST
DESCRIPTION Dense and soft at once. Dark fruit, chocolate, and graphite.

FOOD PAIRINGS Delicious with rosemary-seasoned ribeye and garlic roasted potatoes with parsnips and fennel.