



BIRICHINO

2022 LITTLE BIG BLOCK CARIGNANE OLD VINES

Our sleeper picks for wines of the 2022 vintage come in the unlikely form of Little Big Block Old Vine Carignane and Mourvèdre, planted circa 1895 in the deep, sandy soils of the Sacramento River Delta. Harvest was just prior to a late August heat spike, and Little Big Block managed the tricky feat of marrying heft, concentration and the slight rusticity supplied courtesy of low yielding old vines well-adapted to a warm Mediterranean-like climate, to a lovely, floral perfume recalling hothouse flowers easily obliterated by any number of individual or compounded insults frequently visited upon Mourvèdre and Carignane in California. That catalog of cruelty all too often includes: picking too late or too early, poor racking technique leading to unnecessarily turbid wines leading to an attenuation of aromatic focus and impact, excessive use of new or young American barrels [ditto, and even worse], completely eschewing sulfur [we want to save the planet, but do not believe winemakers should be the guardians of the Earth's microbial population; many of them should not be allowed to run free, fat and happy, like a rabid pit bull in a nursery school playground], etc. Perhaps we have descended into a rant. ["Step aside Boomer!"] Forgive us one brief moment of self congratulation as we suggest, just maybe, we nailed this one. This should evolve slowly and improve considerably over the coming decade, should you have the patience. Braised lamb shank, pumpkin risotto, wild mushrooms and *echte* Minnesota wild rice [tried and verified!] would make a fine accompaniment. Bottled unfiltered.

Harvest Date: August 25, 2022

Appellation: Contra Costa County

Elevage: 10 months in neutral French oak barrels

Production: 5 barrels

