



2018 CHECKERBOARD AURORA VINEYARD

MARTHA MCCLELLAN, WINEMAKER

Aurora Vineyard is nestled in a small valley midway up Diamond Mountain on a large knoll located at an elevation of 1,200 feet. The knoll projects off the mountainside, giving the vineyard full southern exposure, open light from the east and west, and protection from Napa Valley's summer fog. Six acres of the vineyard are planted in the knoll's rich, volcanic soils that are riddled with basalt cobble in a loamy red clay. The remaining six acres are planted in a deep gravelly mix of white volcanic ash and chips of decomposed Rhyolite that were washed down from the steep, rocky crags of Diamond Mountain above.

The fruit was gently de-stemmed and selected berry-by-berry to create this nuanced, elegant vintage of Checkerboard Aurora. On entry the wine is savory with vanilla bean, dark red fruits, and aged prosciutto. It's then broad, fleshy, and full-bodied with spiced plum and caramel and subtler notes of red pepper flake and leather. The tannins are supple and silky and provide the foundation for a lingering finish. It's a crowd pleaser for fans of Checkerboard Aurora.

In its youth, the 2018 vintage benefits from decanting.