



2012 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

The wine is 90 percent Cabernet sauvignon from three vineyards in the Napa Valley (all vineyards Steve is intimately involved in managing), and 10 percent Merlot from our home vineyard. It is a Napa Cab of the old school, a blended wine, age-worthy, complex, and begging for a steak off of the grill. The 2012 vintage was long and mild, and created soft wines with abundant fruit—very different than the cooler and edgier 2011 vintage.

The fruit was fermented at low temperatures and pumped over twice per day; the intensity of the fruit didn't demand a high rate of extraction, and we wanted to preserve the aromatics. Since the temperatures were cool, the fermentation was long and slow, lasting for three weeks. The wine was pressed at dryness, blended immediately, and aged for 20 months in a combination of mostly used and a few new barrels (<20% new French oak).

The nose shows abundant sweet fruit, lots of berries, such as blackberry, cranberry, mulberry, but also Santa Rosa Plum, and spice notes of cloves, nutmeg and allspice. The fruit continues on the palate, plus black licorice, and hints of vanilla and mocha. There is a broad but structured palate, with lots of soft tannin cloaking the acidity, and a long intense finish.

Alcohol is 13.2. TA is 6.28 g/l, pH is 3.67. 374 cases were made.

The Vineyards

The Red Hen Vineyard is on rocky alluvium next to Dry Creek, in the Oak Knoll District. Cool breezes and dry rocky soil combine to create structure and ripe fruits.

The Vare Vineyard is also on Dry Creek, in the Oak Knoll District, but on gravelly soils in the mouth of the canyon. The cool air drainage and short fall days as the sun is blocked by the redwoods result in light aromatic wine.

The Samuel Brannan Vineyard is the oldest vineyard in the Calistoga AVA, planted on alluvial soil on the east side of the Silverado Trail—the hot Calistoga climate results in structured wines with earthy and red fruit characters.

The Matthiasson Vineyard is on loamy alluvial soil on the west side of the Oak Knoll District, just south of the Red Hen Vineyard. It is the coolest of the vineyards, receiving morning fog and afternoon sea breezes most summer days.