



2019 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

In the tradition of Cabernet sauvignon, ours includes a small amount of Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec and Petit Verdot, and is blended from six vineyards throughout the Napa Valley. The three AVAs are Coombsville for structure and black fruit, Rutherford for savory Cabernet characters and bright fruit, and Oak Knoll for soft fruit. 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 bountiful spring rains of 2019 set the stage for juicy, vibrant, red-fruited and aromatic wines—spring rains tend to result in wines defined more by bright acidity than by big tannins, and 2019 is a perfect example. A whole range of red fruits and a soft gentle palate, ready to drink right away.

The remainder of the growing season was mild and easy, making for one of the least dramatic vintages we've had recently. Just the right amount of fruit, and we could harvest it when we wanted for optimum ripeness.

The fruit was fermented in small open-top tanks and either punched down or pumped over twice per day, depending on flavor; we don't strive for a high rate of extraction, instead choosing to preserve the freshness and high-toned aromatics. Since the fermentation temperatures were cool, the fermentations were long and slow, mostly lasting around 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 red fruits, lots of bright cherry along with blackberry, cranberry, mulberry, and framed with hints of mineral/herbal characters such as graphite, cedar, and pencil shavings. The palate is vibrant and fresh, with medium tannin and beautiful acidity. Decanting is highly recommended.

The blend is 86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Cabernet Franc, 5% Merlot, 2% Malbec, and 1 % Petit Verdot. Alcohol is 13.0%, TA is 6.3 g/l, pH is 3.62. 1736 cases produced.

The Vineyards

The Dead Fred Vineyard in Coombsville sits on rocky volcanic soil. Its south-western exposure causes it to pick up heat during the day, and the proximity to the mouth of the Napa Valley keeps the nights cool. We leased it in 2012.

The York Vineyard is in the heart of Rutherford, on the classic gravelly alluvium known to create the famous "Rutherford Dust" character. We leased it in 2013.

The Helen's Gate Vineyard is the home of Arthur Berliner and Marian Lever. It sits on an east-facing hill along Whitehall Lane in the Rutherford District of Napa Valley. We planted the vines in 2009.

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. We traded fruit for viticultural services overseeing the vineyard.

The Bengier Vineyard (formerly Vare) is also on Dry Creek, in the Oak Knoll District, but on gravelly soils in the mouth of the canyon. The cool air drainage down the canyon results in light aromatic wine. We have been hired to oversee the farming of the vineyard since 2002. (It is also the source of Ribolla Gialla fruti that we use and sell to others.)

The Matthiasson Vineyard is on loamy alluvial soil on the west side of the Oak Knoll District. It is the coolest of our vineyards, receiving morning fog and afternoon sea breezes most summer days. This is our home vineyard.

The Phoenix Vineyard is on shale soil on a steep hillside on the far west side of the Oak Knoll District. The vines were planted in 1982 from a heritage selection massale, and are mostly dry-farmed. This is our winery estate vineyard.