



2019 Napa Valley Merlot, Phoenix Vineyard

In 2017 we had an opportunity of a lifetime. After 14 years of making wine in other wineries, where we rented space, we had the chance to buy our own winery. The elderly owners of the vineyard and winery next door to a property we were farming could no longer manage the upkeep and needed help. We started farming their grapes for them, and later that same year purchased the property, granting them a lifetime estate; we gained our dream of a winery, and they secured their home for the rest of their lives.

The Phoenix Vineyard was planted back in 1982 by that same family on the steep hillside above the winery. They used old heritage field selections of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot. With the help of their sons they lovingly cared for the vines themselves the entire time. When we took over, we converted to Organic Farming, planted new vines where some of the old vines had given up, and focused on rejuvenating the old vines with compost and pruning.

The steep hillside and narrow rows require most work to be done by hand—even the compost is applied with shovels and wheelbarrows, that task alone takes two weeks. It's a challenging vineyard to farm but it's worth it.

The Phoenix vineyard sits on some of the most unusual soils in the Napa Valley. While most of Napa soils are of volcanic origin, the East-facing steep hillside Phoenix Vineyard sits on a ridge of ancient marine shale soils. The rock content and sea minerals of these soils create unique wines with high-toned red fruits, perfumed and exotic, with a lightness in the mid-palate yet a long, firm, and structured finish. Wine singular enough, yet complete enough, to be worthy of a single vineyard designation.

The fruit was fermented at low temperatures in small, open-top tanks and punched down by hand one to three times per day, depending on how the wine tasted during the fermentation. This wine was aged in older French oak barrels with 20 months of elevage (aging in barrel) before hand-bottling unfiltered and unfiltered. The Merlot should reward long aging, or enjoyment young with a meal after a little decanting.

The pH is 3.69, TA is 5.9, and alcohol is 12.5%. Only 95 cases produced.