



2020 Napa Valley Cabernet Franc, Phoenix Vineyard

Cabernet Franc is particularly representative of the site where it is grown, and at its best it is delicate, intriguing, and difficult to understand. Beguiling. Since we are in the sunny Napa Valley and we know that the wine will have beautiful fruit flavors, we focus completely on the mineral and herbal aspects of its character and end up with a wine that somehow manages to be both delicate and powerful, aromatic, long, and with an ethereal lightness. It's a completely different expression of Cabernet Franc than one usually finds in the new or the old world, informed by the wines of Chinon, but something totally unique in and of itself — a true representation of the terroir of our Napa vineyard, and showing a restrained side of Napa that is rarely seen anymore.

The wine is 100 percent Cabernet franc from our Phoenix vineyard.

Because of the soft tannins present in the fruit we included 50% whole clusters in the fermentation. The whole cluster also give us more of that beguiling Cab Franc spice. We fermented in small open top bins, with two punch downs per day. We gently pressed just after dryness, and aged the wine in neutral puncheons for 10 months.

The pH is 3.73 the TA is 5.47 g/L, and the alcohol is only 11.0%. 209 cases produced.

The Cabernet Franc has distinct aromas of dry leaves in the fall, poblano chili peppers, and sage, with plummy fruit. The tannins are very soft in the mouth, with an iron-like minerality on the finish. It's light on the palate but firm at the same time — it's a wine with many contradictions that is hard to describe with tasting notes. Easy drinking, but incredibly complex. Great with food.

The Vineyard

The Phoenix Vineyard was planted back in 1982 the steep hillside above the winery using old heritage field selections of Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, and Merlot. The owners, with the help of their sons, 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 Cabernet Franc is fully dry-farmed on the no-till hillside.

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 and a long soft finish. Wine singular enough, yet complete enough, to be worthy of a single vineyard designation.