



2020 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

In the tradition of Cabernet Sauvignon, ours is a blended wine and includes a small amount of other Bordeaux varieties to complete the wine. For complexity and balance our Cab is composed of fruit 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, age-worthy, complex, and begging for a steak off the grill.

2020 was a drought year, which for us can be a very positive thing, because vines adapt to dry conditions by producing less fruit with more structure and concentration. The dry conditions told us that we were going to have a lower crop of very powerful wines, so we focused in the vineyards on supporting the vines and taking advantage of a golden opportunity to make a special age-worthy vintage.

Besides the dry weather, the remainder of the growing season was nice and consistent, no major weather extremes. And then, of course, we had dry lightning and the fires hit.

Winemakers worry about fires because the smoke on the grapes can taint the wine. We assessed the wind patterns and the ripeness of our fruit and decided to start harvesting after the first set of fires. Fortunately, we are in the southern part of Napa, and the wind cooperated with us, pushing the smoke away to the north-east, so (miraculously) we were able to harvest all our fruit over the next several weeks with no smoke damage. By the time the second fire hit we were finished with harvest, and it was a good thing, because that fire blew smoke right into our vineyards, which would have wiped us out if we hadn't already finished.

Fortunately, the smoke doesn't hurt the vines at all, and you don't need to worry about any carryover into the next year.

The fruit was fermented in small 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. Fermentation temperatures are cool, so the fermentations were long and slow, mostly lasting around two weeks. The wine was pressed at dryness, blended immediately after ML, and aged for 20 months in a combination of mostly used and a few new barrels (<20% new French oak).

The nose shows abundant dark and red fruits, lots of 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 a good amount of age-worthy tannin and beautiful acidity. Decanting is highly recommended.

The blend is 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4 % Petit Verdot, and 1% Cabernet Franc. Alcohol is 13.5%, TA is 5.77 g/l, pH is 3.8. 1926 cases produced.

The Estate Vineyards that Comprise the Blend (all are CCOF Certified Organic)

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.

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

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.

The Circa Vineyard is on gravelly loam down the street from York in Rutherford. Cool breezes and dry rocky soil combine to create structure and ripe fruits.



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. (It is also the source of Ribolla Gialla fruit that we use and sell to others.)

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.

The Gray Vineyard is on rocky alluvium down the road from our winery, in the Oak Knoll District. Cool breezes and dry rocky soil combine to create structure and ripe fruits.