



## **2021 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, Dead Fred Vineyard**

A single vineyard wine should have its own story to tell, a unique personality, and an innate balance and completeness. The Dead Fred Vineyard fits this bill. Planted in 2001 by our dear friends Lisa Cort and David Goldman, we leased it in 2012 and started farming it ourselves, using organic practices to bring out the best from the special soil. The Dead Fred Vineyard is a core component of our Napa Valley Cabernet blend, but for our single vineyard offering we select a small amount of the wine (we harvest multiple times so have different lots to choose from) that we feel best describes the terroir.

2021 was a record drought year, and the drought truly defined the vintage. The year was similar to 2013, but even more extreme, in that unlike the sudden dryness of 2013, 2021 was part of a multi-year drought, so the vines were even more impacted. Vines adapt to dry conditions by producing smaller berries with more tannin structure and concentration. The dry conditions told us that we were going to have some of the most structured and age-worthy wines we had ever made, so we focused on supporting the vines and helping them make it to harvest.

As a major stroke of luck, other than the dry weather, the growing season was nice and consistent, with no major weather extremes. And with a record early vintage, we were able to harvest a mostly full crop of incredible fruit.

The Dead Fred Vineyard in Coombsville sits on a rocky volcanic knolltop, with soil derived from volcanic ash with lots of rocks made from rhyolite (compressed volcanic ash). Its south-western exposure causes the soil to pick up heat during the day, but the proximity to the mouth of the Napa Valley, with its morning fog and afternoon sea breezes, keeps the air cool. This combination of warm volcanic soil and cool marine air creates fruit that is uncommonly structured and ripe, yet fresh and mineral.

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. For richness and complexity, but also aromatic preservation, elevage was in a combination of new and used French barrique (Taransaud and Bousset), used French demi-muid (Atalier), and used Austrian Foudre (Stockinger).

The pH is 3.86, TA is 5.44, and alcohol is 12.0%. 390 cases produced.

This wine always has signature black fruits and graphite, very full, yet elegant and mineral ("weight without heaviness"). This special wine will develop for many years.