



2004

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

Vintage and Winemaking

Farming, by its nature, changes from year to year. Weather that is either too warm or too cool during the growing season can affect the grapes' flavor and texture or alter a vineyard's yield. In recent years, viticultural choices we have made—in rootstock and clonal selection, in planting density and trellising, and in the timing and frequency of crop thinning—have given us the flexibility to better adapt to these weather variations. Our goal is always to ensure optimal ripening, and our daily activities must change with the current conditions. In 2004, we experienced an atypical double-barreled weather pattern in the Napa Valley that tested us at both ends of the spectrum.

Warm, dry spring weather jump-started the season with an early and rapid budbreak. Temperatures remained moderate until late August, when heat provided a boost to our Napa Valley floor vineyards—including Rutherford, St. Helena and Calistoga. We began harvesting on September 1, very early by our standards, and continued for two very busy weeks through September 13. The grapes were already rich, dark and sweetly ripe—I would even say delicious for eating. If the season had ended then, we would have called this a successful, even exceptional, vintage.

Then came a pause, as the weather cooled and our mountain vineyard sites—on Atlas Peak and Mt. Veeder—caught up. Patience was required as these grapes ripened to full maturity. These lots, harvested through October 22, gave us the dark berry flavor, firm structure and textural components that we believe fully exemplify how mountain sites can and do blend well with valley floor grapes. It's rather a *yin-yang* association—the valley fruit dark and supple, the mountain bright and insistent. In my view, no one single vineyard lot—from either end of this “split season”—could have given us a wine of this depth and complexity.

Chuck Wagner

Tasting notes

A burst of black fruit aromas, the essence of perfect summer berries. Sweet, ripe blackberry flavors with an undertone of mocha and toasted oak. Balancing acidity and a fine, chalky texture carry the wine through to an exceptionally long finish, with no falling off of the rich fruit flavors. From first sip to last, nothing is missing as the wine crosses the palate.

Release date: July 2006

Suggested retail price: \$70