



Cabernet Sauvignon

Cienega Valley

This fruit-forward Cabernet displays aromas of cherry, cassis and toast. Its bold mouthfeel is rounded by ripe tannins, dark chocolate flavors and a smooth long finish. Serve with roast pork, lean cuts of beef or veal, or black mushroom risotto.

Technical Data

Appellation: Cienega Valley

Varietal content: 95% Cabernet Sauvignon, 3% Cabernet Franc, 2% Merlot

Yield: less than one ton per acre

Finished alcohol: 13.7%

pH: 3.67

Total acid: 5.6g/L

Vineyards

DeRose Vineyards was founded on land with wine history dating back to the 1850s. The property changed hands many times over the years and was purchased by the DeRose and Cedolini families in 1988. Later, Winemaker Pat DeRose rescued several acres of abandoned vines from the clutches of tall weeds and thistles, including 40 planted before 1900. Five of those acres were grafted to Cabernet Sauvignon in 1991.



Cabernet Sauvignon grows in an assortment of soil types including a rocky mixture created by the San Andreas Fault and a fine sandy-loam that contains high concentrations of calcium. All of these soils are quite fertile and have very good drainage. Tried-and-proven terraces help prevent erosion during heavy winter storms.

Besides old vines and great soil, the property's distinct combination of altitude, climate and cultural practices helps define its terroir. With elevations over 1,100 feet, vineyards enjoy cool temperatures and a long growing season. Surrounding mountains protect vines from direct contact with the cooler Monterey Basin to the west and the fiercely hot San Joaquin Valley to the east. These uplifts also block out most of the fog associated with other California growing areas. Averaging about 15 inches, annual rainfall is considerably less than the north coast.

Vines are aggressively pruned to attain proper balance, often with two or three growing seasons in mind. Leaf pulling as well as shoot and cluster thinning opens the canopy to additional sunlight. This regimen allows grapes to achieve deeper colors and richer flavors. Annual yield for the old vines is less than one ton per acre.

Fermentation

Grape clusters were destemmed with much of the fruit left intact. The must was transferred to open-top stainless steel tanks for fermentation with native yeasts. Temperatures were kept under 88° F. for the 15 to 18 days of fermentation. Caps were managed with both pumpovers and punchdowns three or four times daily. Lots were pressed, allowed to undergo secondary fermentation, settled for about two weeks, blended and then aged in French and American oak barrels for 24 months. "Gravity-feed racking" was used exclusively throughout the process. Bottled unfinned and unfiltered, the wine was aged for three additional months prior to release.