



2006 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

Vintage Summary

2006 began with consistent rain and cool weather. The vines, tired from the heavy 2005 harvest, awakened in early May with unusual warm weather for late spring. May, June and July averaged a high of 78 degrees. August and September lingered in the 85-degree range, helping achieve bright, ripe fruit character without picking based on concerns of too much sugar and high alcohol. Rain showed its ugly face in late October, but our low yields had us completely harvested before the storm hit. Harvest took place October 23-27, 2006.

Vineyard Practices

Aggressively pruning the vines helps focus the plants stored carbohydrates on promoting strong early growth in shoots. When shoots reach around 6 to 8 inches, we remove any growth not intentionally left at pruning. To help intensify color, ripen tannins and maintain healthy vines, we increased sun exposure and air circulation by removing laterals and creating a tunnel through the middle of the canopy. In May, we removed smaller fruit bearing shoots that might have had difficulty ripening their clusters to decrease production and increase fruit quality. In June, an early crop removal pass was done to balance out the unusual heavy crop load. The warm summer provoked early veraison, and to ensure we had even maturity throughout the vineyard, we removed green or pink colored fruit. Yields of less than 3 tons per acre extended the growing season and brought balance and even maturity to the vineyards.

Winemaking Practices

Our winemaking team began sampling the ripening grapes on a regular basis in early September. During the last few weeks before the grapes were picked, we tasted the skins, juice and seeds two to three times per week. We evaluated color, flavor and tannin ripeness to determine the exact harvest date.

A skilled crew handpicked the grapes into ½ ton picking bins. Once at the winery, our crusher-destemmer removed all of the stems and lightly crushed the grapes. The must (crushed grapes) was then placed in a stainless steel tank. UV-43 yeast, a strain known for its intense cherry and berry characteristics, then fermented the wine to dryness over a twelve-day period. During fermentation, the fermenting wine was pumped over for about 35 minutes twice daily to extract the ripe tannins and intense flavors from the skins. After fermentation, another two to three weeks of pump overs were needed to extract the slower releasing tannins found in Cabernet Sauvignon. Malolactic fermentation took place in barrel to incorporate the complex flavors. We blended the wine in mid-July of 2007 to allow the wine to integrate for 9 months prior to bottling. Our 2006 blend showcases 9 different vineyards from throughout the Paso Robles region. The wine was aged for 18 months in 44% new French oak.

Tasting Notes

Our 2006 Cabernet Sauvignon is inky purple in color. Dark, black and red fruit fill the glass. Blueberry, Strawberry and red currant are surrounded by subtle aromas from the new French oak. The entry is rich and fruit driven, balanced by a weighted mouth feel and integrated oak. The finish contains soft, structured tannins showing the wine's extended aging ability.

Specifics

Barrel aging:	18 months in 225-L oak barrels, 44% new	
Blended:	7/4/ 2007	Barrel replacement: 20-30% annually on average
Harvest dates:	10/23-10/28, 2006	Racking; every 6 months
Brix at Harvest:	25.7	Fining: none
Harvest method:	100% hand-harvested	Filtering: none
Fermentation:	12 to 15 days with UV-43	Bottled: April 18, 2008
Maceration:	18 to 35 days including fermentation	pH: 3.76
Total Acidity:	.66 g/100ml	Alcohol: 15%
Pump overs:	2 to 4 times daily during fermentation	Barrels: Allier, Nevers, Bertrange
Malolactic fermentation:	in barrel	Yeasts: UV-43