



VENGE 2018 SUGARLOAF VINEYARD CABERNET FRANC, NAPA VALLEY

Friends, I have been in the winegrowing business since as long as I can remember. I am now at the age of 44 years and I can count on both hands the number of times I have coined a vintage as “great,” meaning, that the vintage is of an extent, amount, or intensity above average. When considering greatness of vintages, and I mean this purely from what happened within the vineyard, vintages such as, 1987, 1990, 1997, 1999, 2007, and 2012, all come to mind. The common thread in all of these vintages was consistency throughout the growing season that led to near perfect, and above average, crop sets in Bordeaux varieties. And, now we can include vintage 2018 as one of the greats!

The debut vintage of this wine captures all the great reasons to produce Cabernet Franc. The dark ruby-red color sets this wine apart and immediately tells you it is a pure example of the varietal. Fragrant aromas of sweet tobacco and cedar smoke combine with elements of dried rose petal, blackberry and truffles inform the first impressions. There is wonderful richness and depth to the palate where ripe blackberry and spicy clove flavors are lifted by touches of black licorice and star anise. The significant complexity found in our Cabernet Franc is a testament to the vineyard block and our winemaking methods. Cold soaking for five days, native yeast fermentations in open top bins, daily hand punch-downs, and 100% free run juice barreled down to 65% new French oak develop layers of deliciousness. The resulting wine has the structure and balance to guarantee it holds a prominent place in your cellar until at least 2032.

IN THE VINEYARD

Located adjacent to Phelps and Cakebread Vineyards’ block, Sugarloaf Vineyard was planted on hillsides with rocky soils in the southern Napa Valley AVA. The elevation ranges from 250 to 1050 feet above sea level. The area faces southwest towards San Pablo Bay and the climate is moderately warm with afternoon marine winds cooling the warmer air surrounding the hillsides. The rocky soils promote low to moderate vigor creating balanced hillside fruit with velvet-like tannins.

IN THE CELLAR

The fruit was hand sorted and destemmed into small, open top, stainless steel bins and time on skins lasted 23 days. The fruit was then lightly pressed, keeping “free run” and “press” fractions separate, with free run fractions aged in 65% new, tight grained French Oak barrels for a total of 22 months. While we do add yeast to finish primary fermentation, we allow the indigenous malolactic bacteria to complete the secondary fermentation. Bottled unfinned, unfiltered.

425 Cases Produced