

# WINTER 2022

FEBRUARY

VENGE VINEYARDS & WINERY



## DRIVE FOR SHOW, PUTT FOR DOUGH

We sure love our sports metaphors here at Venge Vineyards. It allows us the opportunity to redefine the mystery of wine-growing into concepts that are more relatable to a broader audience, while providing the entertainment value found so common in our trade. Around here, golf is a central theme in our story when it comes to making friends, hosting dinners, or acquiring much needed financing for the business. Just ask Jason (our GM), Bradley (our Estate Manager for Croix Estate), or Joe (our Eastern Regional Sales Manager) how vital golf is to building relationships. These guys will drop a whole lot of good stories in a single serving of great wine to make your head spin! So, I thought, let's bring out the old golf credo of "drive for show, putt for dough" and relate it to what we do here at Venge Vineyards.

To carry the metaphor forward, "driving for show" is the equivalent of engaging with elite growers in our region to give us the best shot at producing the best wines possible. As every winemaker will tell you, when it comes to their craft, you can't make great wine from mediocre grapes. Indeed, beginning this year you will see more spectacular Cabernets coming from multiple Napa Valley AVA's. Additional, single vineyard wines will be coming over the next few years from Diamond Mountain, Stags Leap, Oakville (East), and Rutherford. In addition, we are now exploring Howell Mountain! Making sure we hit the fairway and reaching the green in our craft is only the beginning of our work.

In "putting for dough," we seek to align our aim with decision and precision. It is at the doorstep of the winery that we find our state-of-the-art *Pellenc* sorting system that produces "fruit caviar." The whole berries, which are pristine and free of pips, leaves, and any MOG (material other than grapes), are gently transferred via gravity fed movement into a combination of stainless steel, concrete, and open top fermenters. This process sets up for the difficult task of producing wine as naturally as possible, where minimal intervention properly develops aroma, color, and flavor extraction from the grapes. Fermentations are slow and cool, allowing a thorough, balanced, native yeast fermentation to take hold. We barrel down the free run juice in multiple ratios of new oak that ranges from 65% to 100% new, air-dried French oak aging.

We gently fine our wines via barrel to tank racking using gentle, forced air—*bulldogging*—pumps. All of these steps are taken to assure that we sink our putt when it counts most and produce perfection in the glass. Making wine at an elite level is a lot of pressure; however, it is why we live and make wine in Napa Valley. Proving our mettle at the pinnacle of wine production in America—now that is exciting!

Speaking of teeing up a power drive, let's turn our focus to you and our Winter 2022 wine selections which, once again, highlights the best of production here at Venge Vineyards.

First up is a wine that we will only produce once: our 2019 Oakville 360 Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon grown right in the heart of the Oakville AVA. We had the great fortune to have the opportunity to produce wine from this vineyard in 2019 and we couldn't resist the temptation of production. Not knowing what would occur with the 2020 vintage, the decision to produce this wine is turning out to be a most fortuitous development for the winery. Lush, full-bodied and beautifully aromatic, you will want to snatch up additional bottles of this wine, as it will continue to improve with age. The 2019 Sugarloaf Vineyard Cabernet Franc is absolutely spectacular. It is another rich, concentrated, aromatic rendition that will win over friends and collectors alike. There is, once again, something to please everyone in this wine. Finally, the refreshing 2020 Brown Ranch Vineyard Chardonnay from Los Carneros, Napa, is our best effort yet from this vineyard. We have finely tuned our approach on this wine with spectacular results. We were fortunate to have our Chardonnays come into the cellar long before the fires torched Napa Valley. This is a rare gem where Oscar Renteria is growing Chardonnay to perfection and it certainly shows in the glass!

I am so thankful that you continue to believe in, and appreciate, our work here at our winery. You are the light that awakens our awareness to dream big and believe we have what it takes to make the wines that are worthy of bottling under our family name.

Kirk P. Venge  
Proprietor & Winemaker

## 2019 Oakville 360 Vineyard, Oakville, Napa Valley

*“This will be the first and only vintage produced of Oakville 360 Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon. What a rare treat to have the opportunity to produce a bottling from this renowned vineyard.”*

The Oakville AVA extends over and expanse of well-drained gravel soil between the Vaca and Mayacamas Mountains. The soils found in the AVA are the result of sedimentary deposits from the hills that form Napa Valley. What makes Oakville’s climate distinctive is its transitional, mid-valley location. Oakville is just far enough south to receive regular morning fog from the San Francisco and San Pablo bays, which slows the warming in the early morning hours. Once the fog lifts by mid-morning, Oakville receives the full benefit of the Napa Valley sun. When afternoon temperatures begin to peak, the bay pushes in cool air to the north to reset the cooling cycle for the evening. Ideal conditions for inducing perfection in the glass!

The Renteria family has been farming in the Napa Valley since 1962. The Renteria 360 Vineyard is located on the north end of Oakville, at the

border of Rutherford, just off Silverado Trail. The 60-acre vineyard was planted in 2012 and is comprised of multiple blocks with different clone and rootstock combinations. The wine is crafted from three distinct blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon clones 4, 15, and 169.

Renteria Vineyard Management was founded in 1987 by Salvador Renteria, with guiding principles focused on respect, care, and integrity. Salvador Renteria is a Mexican immigrant from Jalisco, who followed his older brother north to Napa Valley to work a wine grape harvest in the early 1960’s. Salvador had been working as a barber in Mexico, but was tempted by the endless opportunities California had to offer. This trip to Napa Valley was truly the start of something better. Renteria’s ethos aligned with our values so closely, that Kirk Venge became consulting Winemaker for Renteria Family Wines.

This will be the first and only vintage produced of Oakville 360 Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon.

The serendipitous fortune found from this vineyard in 2019 led to our decision to make a one-off, Oakville classic Cabernet Sauvignon. What a rare treat to have the opportunity to produce a bottling from this vineyard, renown among the farming insiders within the Oakville AVA.

Wonderfully aromatic on the nose, this wine invites you in and reminds you why Oakville is so interesting. Ripe black fruits lead to silky, soft tannins, black olive, mocha, star anise, baking spices, and vanillin are deftly balanced with a touch of acid to round out the savory finish. Quintessential Oakville Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine will age gracefully through 2030, when aged in proper conditions.

### 94 Points—2019 Oakville 360 Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

“Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2019 Cabernet Sauvignon Oakville 360 Vineyard rockets out of the glass with energetic scents of baked plums, stewed black cherries and blackcurrant jelly, followed by hints of tar and cedar. The full-bodied palate is jam-packed with juicy black fruits, framed by plush tannins and just enough freshness, delivering a long, opulent finish.”

Robert Parker’s *Wine Advocate*, Lisa Perotti-Brown, November 2021

### 94 Points—2019 Sugarloaf Vineyard Cabernet Franc

“Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2019 Cabernet Franc Sugarloaf Vineyard leaps with vibrant kirsch, red currant jelly and fragrant soil scents, plus pencil lead and mossy tree bark hints with a waft of roses. The full-bodied palate has a firm, fine grained tannic structure with lovely freshness and loads of red and black fruit layers, finishing long and perfumed.”

Robert Parker’s *Wine Advocate*, Lisa Perotti-Brown, November 2021

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## 2019 Sugarloaf Vineyard Cabernet Franc, Napa Valley

When Cabernet Franc is grown to perfection, one finds great richness and depth in the variety. The significant complexity found in the 2019 vintage is a testament to the uniqueness of the block and its proximity to ideal diurnal temperature fluctuations. The resulting wine has structure and depth that will guarantee it holds a prominent place in your cellar for years to come.

Located adjacent to Phelps and Cakebread Vineyards, Sugarloaf Vineyard was planted on hillsides with rocky soils in the 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.

Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Cabernet Franc are grown here, producing wines that are classically fruit-forward

and supple, displaying notes of opulent fruit with well balanced acidity.

Used historically in our wines as a blending varietal that shores up the flavor gaps in valley floor Cabernet Sauvignon, or forms the body of our Arsenal BDX “Reverse Bordeaux” blend, this noble variety produces a wine that stands on its own when grown to perfection.

We understand that a fair number of wine consumers are hesitant to embrace Cabernet Franc. If not grown in the right climate, in the right soils, and to full ripeness, the variety can be esoteric, requiring the right foods to coax out its personality. However, when the environment is appropriate and the fruit allowed to grow to full maturity and ripeness, Cabernet Franc is a work worth contemplation.

Our Cabernet Franc is hand-picked and moved to our four stage *Pellenc* sorting system. We call this the “Ferrari” of sorting machines as it has the capacity to sort grapes flawlessly and allow 2 people to do the work of what used to take 8 people.

The resulting destemmed berries produce what we call “grape caviar.” From the sorting stage, we move the whole berries via gravity into a combination of stainless steel and concrete fermentation tanks, where time on skins lasts approximately 16 days. The free run juice is moved to 65% new, 3-year-air-dried French oak barrels to age for 18 months. Gentle barrel-to-tank racking via *bulldogging* compressed air aids in naturally clarifying the wine, bottling unfiltered.

Aromatically, our second vintage of Cabernet Franc is a true classic: Sweet, fragrant aromas of freshly pulled rose petals, robust tobacco, sweet cedar smoke, black fruits and truffles pique curiosity. The palate is luxurious! Fine grained tannins complemented by sugared blackberries, semi-sweet chocolate, warm clove and star anise lead to a savory and delicious finish.

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## 2020 Brown Ranch Vineyard “Dijon Clone 76” Chardonnay Los Carneros, Napa Valley

In 2012 the Renteria’s purchased the 30 acre Brown Ranch (formerly associated with Saintsbury Winery and formerly a cattle grazing ranch taking its name from the former owner, Nadine Brown). The vineyard is bordered by HdV’s Hyde Vineyard and Beaulieu’s Vineyard No.9 on Old Sonoma Road.

Twenty nine acres of vines (Pinot Noir and Chardonnay) were already planted but most of these vines were afflicted with a fungi disease, *Eutypa* (otherwise known as the Dead-arm Dieback) causing trunks or arms of the vines to essentially rot and die. Rather than pulling all of these vines out, their vineyard manage-

ment team decided to keep the rootstock, cut off the trunk just above the soil and allow a bud from the varietal to grow, training it into a new trunk and then trellising it when it became of size. The Brown Ranch’s hillside alluvial soils, with Dijon Clone 76 budwood set atop pre-existing rootstock, make a Chardonnay that is worthy of producing under the Venge name.

Following tradition, our Chardonnays are harvested and whole-cluster pressed into neutral French Oak, where primary and secondary native fermentation took place over a period of four months. The long, slow fermentation process assures silky

consistency. Aged *sur-lie* for an extended period without stirring, this wine was fined via gentle racking and cold stabilization, bottling unfiltered.

We love the results from the 2020 vintage! Freshly balanced and stylish, featuring a light, pale straw presence in the glass with a bouquet of mild allspice, citrus zest, toasted pine nuts and pecans, rocky flints, and lightly toasted oak. Crisp, savory pineapple, sweet delicious apple, savory stone fruit, and ripe pear lead into mouthwatering deliciousness.

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## Access Your Wine Allocation

[WWW.VENGEVINEYARDS.COM/ACQUIRE](http://WWW.VENGEVINEYARDS.COM/ACQUIRE)

**Don't let your glass sit empty!** Your Repurchase Allocation Awaits.

Due to very limited production and zealous demand for our wines, we strongly recommend a prompt response should you desire more of the wines featured in your Winter 2022 shipment.

Need personal assistance?  
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