



ROBERT MONDAVI WINERY

1998

Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve

Appellation: Napa Valley
Total Acid: 0.57 %
Final pH: 3.79

Residual Sugar: Dry (.08%)
Alcohol: 14.1% by volume
Varietal: 84% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Cabernet Franc, 4% Merlot, 1% Petit Verdot

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Rich layers of cassis, boysenberry and black cherry slowly unfold in our Robert Mondavi 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve. Intriguing nuances of spice, cedar forest and licorice heighten the wine's complexity. The excellent structure, with broad, muscular tannins and a long, velvety finish, promises even greater development with bottle aging for 15 or more years. Our Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve is made from several highly acclaimed Napa Valley vineyards, primarily from the Oakville District, that we have chosen as having the most expressive fruit character and finest balance of the vintage. Extended maceration, a long malolactic fermentation and aging in new French oak barrels, captured and enhanced the wine's expression of vineyard terroir.

VINTAGE

In Napa Valley, as throughout California, 1998 was an unusual year for weather. El Niño gave us a growing season punctuated with extremes — twice the normal rainfall, 18 days of frost, cold weather at bloom and record heat spells. Yields for some varieties were down because of the wet weather during bloom and berry set. A period of excessive summer heat caused sunburn in some vineyards, necessitating thinning to maintain high quality. But then, as harvest approached, the weather improved, and we had near perfect mild, sunny days for ripening. The small, loose clusters had sufficient “hang time” on the vines to create vibrant flavors and natural balance in the wines. Overall, the 1998 harvest, one of the latest of the decade, turned out to be of excellent quality.

VINEYARDS

Our 1998 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve captures the personality of Napa Valley's celebrated Oakville District with beautifully articulated flavors of berries, cassis and spice. We selected 70% of the blend from the Oakville District with 40% harvested from Robert Mondavi's historic To Kalon Estate Vineyard. This vineyard has been continually planted to grapes for over 130 years and, for more than 50 years, it has been the backbone of Robert Mondavi's finest Cabernet Sauvignon wines. To Kalon Vineyard and the neighboring vineyards selected for this wine, are on the Oakville bench where low-fertility, well-drained soils allow deep rooting and the development of complex flavors in the grapes. To enhance the ripe berry complexity of the wine, and complement the Oakville District fruit, we harvested 15% of the grapes from the Stags Leap District, 10% from the Carneros District, and 5% from a vineyard in west Napa Valley. *We hand-harvested the grapes at an average sugar level of 24.6° Brix with 0.67% acid and 3.69 pH.*

FERMENTATION AND AGING

The vineyard-lots of grapes selected as reserve candidates receive special attention throughout winemaking and aging. We hand-harvested the grapes into small bins and brought them to the winery for destemming and light crushing. The wine was fermented with a combination of cultured and native yeasts for greater complexity. After an average of 37 days extended skin contact to naturally soften tannins and enhance varietal character, the wine was gently pressed and transferred to 60 gallon, chateau-style French oak barrels (85% new French oak). All the wine completed an extended (85% native) malolactic fermentation in barrels for softness and depth. To achieve natural clarity, we gently racked the wine barrel-to-barrel six times during over 15 months of aging. The wine was bottled unfiltered to fully retain the vibrant aromas and rich, powerful flavors.