



2012 WOLFSKILL RESERVE

WOLFSKILL VINEYARD

100% Cabernet Sauvignon planted in the 1970s by one of the descendants of William Wolfskill, one of the first great grape growers of California in the 19th century. The vineyard is on a moderately sloping hillside of excellent, well-drained Aiken soil, at the rocky intersection of Gordon Valley and Wooden Valley, just a few miles south of the Napa line in Suisun Valley. The vineyard is farmed with the great care and wisdom of Steve Tenbrink, who also grows the Babylon Petite Sirah for us. The vineyard is very restrained in its growth, and trained to a classical California sprawl, offering lots of dappled sunshine and easy passage of air for excellent, slow ripening without any roasting or dehydration.

We began working with this vineyard in 2007. From the beginning, we had the sense that we could make very good wine from the vineyard but it took us several years of study to produce a wine that we think reflects what is special about the vineyard. This is the first year that we bottled the wine alone. We used the richest wine from a tank fermentation for the normal bottling, and this, the most subtle, restrained wine for this reserve bottling.

We brought the fruit in from the highest and least vigorous section of the vineyard, introduced it gradually into two 600 liter puncheons turned vertical, with their heads removed. We stomped the fruit thoroughly as it went in, intending to break every berry and release some of them from the stems. Then we refrigerated the puncheons for a week and macerated the fruit to release a wide spectrum and depth of flavor. Once the fermentation began, we encouraged it by heating and bring the whole system up to about 95 degrees and keeping it as warm as possible for about a month. During this time, we are climbing into the puncheons and performing pigeage-- foot treading— no less than 4 times per day. The maturation is in neutral oak barrels, for about 36 months, with infrequent topping and little SO2 until bottling.

Our customary winemaking never emphasizes fruit and instead pushes the wines toward more secondary and tertiary flavors and aromas, but the nature of this vineyard is to produce wine with a distinct and irrepressible classical core of fruit. The wine has more acidity and minerality than many of its northern California peers, but it is still a very classical California Cab, produced in homage to the Cabs of the 1970s.

TOTAL PRODUCTION:
about 48 cases