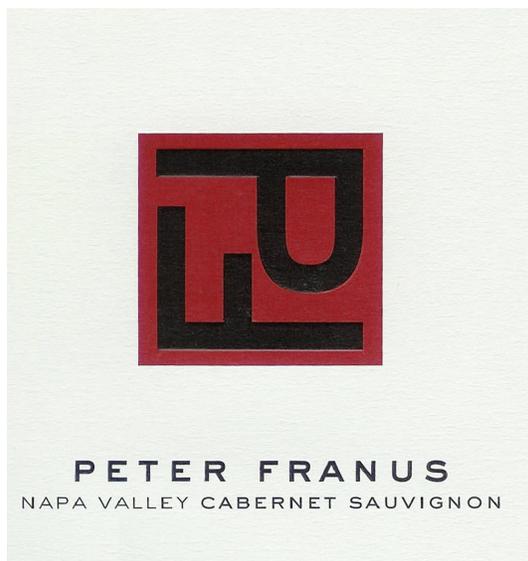


2003 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON



Vineyards:	Rancho Chimiles 78% Hyde Vineyard 22%
Composition:	93% Cabernet Sauvignon 7% Cabernet Franc
Harvest Date:	October 8, 10, 15, 20, 2003
Fermentation:	18 days, up to 86°
Maceration:	21 days average
Oak aging:	17 months 100% French Oak 72% new
Bottling Date:	April 11, 2005
Production:	1520 cases 750ml

I just returned from a business trip to Florida where I presented my wines to various restaurants and retailers. On the last visit of the trip, we tasted the 2003 Cabernet with a well-known wine buyer who over the years has assembled a magnificent wine list for his restaurant—"95 points," he predicted! A clap of thunder shook the building at that very moment.

Since 1996 I have worked with Terry Wilson's Rancho Chimiles, located in Wooden Valley on the south east side of Napa Valley. His eastern exposure hillside vineyard and attention to detail each year make his Cabernet Sauvignon the benchmark in the cellar. Eyes open wide when people taste out of barrel. Always concentrated, complex, and layered, it has never let me down. In 2003 for the first time, I obtained a small amount of his Cabernet Franc which not only added some interesting spice notes to the nose, but curiously moved the wine into a more Bordeaux-like direction. Thinking back, it was the wine that my French visitors often responded to the most.

After the blast of mid-September heat subsided, the Rancho Chimiles Cabernets could now undergo slower and longer ripening in the cooler autumn days, on the vine nearly a month longer than the previous two vintages. What a pleasure, instead of broiling heat compelling you to harvest.

The Carneros Cabernet Sauvignon of Larry Hyde always does a wonderful job of adding softness, acidity, and forward, almost floral notes to the final blend. Hang time for Cabernet in Carneros is typically long, another virtue of the region for Bordeaux reds.

I am truly drawn to my 2003 Cabernet Sauvignon. The dark ruby hue invites you to discover the aromas of allspice, lavender, bay and cassis. I find the firmness of the structure just right, supporting the lushness of the mouth that makes Cabernet Sauvignon what it is. California wines, especially Cabernet, are often faulted these days for their lack of balance and true elegance—allow me to present my nominee for the counterpoint.