

2004 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON



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2004

Vineyards: Rancho Chimiles
Truchard Vineyard

Composition: 88% Cabernet Sauvignon
12% Cabernet Franc

Harvest Date: September 12, October 4

Fermentation: 18 days, up to 85°

Maceration: 21 days average

Oak aging: 20 months
100% French Oak 60% new

Bottling Date: June 29, 2006

Production: 993 cases 750ml

I have the good fortune of working with some of Napa Valley's finest vineyards. Even in so-called difficult vintages like 2003, my growers' efforts and the quality of their grapes result in outstanding wine. Consistency is their hallmark—it just seems like we are all rewarded a little more in the vintages deemed to be fabulous such as 2004.

Since 1996 I have worked with Terry Wilson's Rancho Chimiles, located in Wooden Valley on the south east side of Napa Valley. He sells to such wineries as Pahlmeyer and Stags Leap Wine Cellars, so you can see I am in good company. His eastern exposure vines, now over 15 years old, grow in an exquisite hillside setting, and are always meticulously maintained with crop levels kept low. The resulting wine is always deep, rich, and complex, typically the benchmark in the cellar. In 2003, he began to provide me with some of his Cabernet Franc as well.

2004 also became a transitional year in terms of my Carneros growers. In place of Hyde Vineyards, I began with Tony and Jo Ann Truchard. I should say, began to work again. I was familiar with their fruit from my days at Mount Veeder Winery many years ago, and in fact had used some Cabernet Franc and Merlot in my very first Franus Cabernet in 1992. It is a pleasure to be working with them again and have access to some exciting new parcels they have planted in subsequent years.

In 2004, early budbreak, warm consistent summer weather, and a few late summer hot spells resulted in a harvest several weeks earlier than the previous year. It wasn't so much that the growing season was shorter, but rather that it got off to an earlier start.

A word or two usually pop into mind as I write notes about a particular wine. Pure and elegant define my 2004. The usual sweet toasty oak, cinnamon and bay notes are surrounded by classic cassis. The flavors, somewhat minerally in a way, expand on the palate but are held in check by the structure, suggesting what I think will be a long-lived wine.