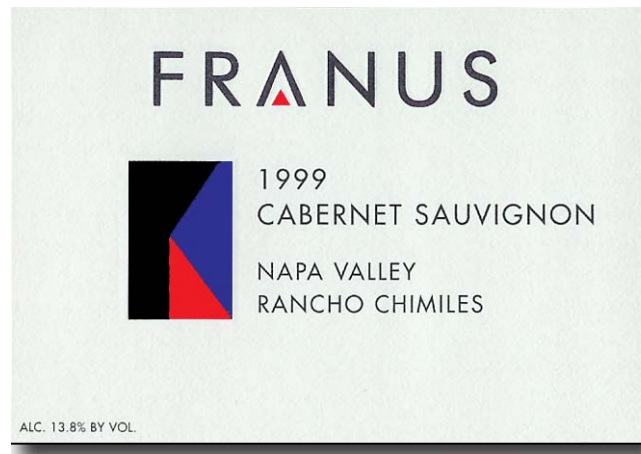


# 1999 FRANUS CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY RANCHO CHIMILES



Vineyard:	Rancho Chimiles Terry Wilson, Grower	Maceration:	33 days
Composition:	100% Cabernet Sauvignon	Oak Aging:	17 months, 70% new French oak
Harvest Date:	October 1, 2, 3, 1999	Bottling Date:	April 12, 2001
Fermentation:	30 days, peak temperature 86°	Production:	250 cases

Even though I was aware of Terrence Wilson's Cabernet earlier, it was 1996 when I began to work with his grapes. Previously the fruit had gone to Stags Leap Wine Cellars and Chateau Montelena, but now Franus and Pahlmeyer were in the enviable position of sharing the vineyard. The Franus Cabernet was suddenly notched up with a new depth, backbone, and weight. It soon became apparent that the Rancho Chimiles Cab was in a special category and deserved a vineyard-designated bottling of its own. This is that first release.

Rancho Chimiles is located in Wooden Valley in the southern end of Napa Valley, east of the town of Napa. No one is more dedicated than Wilson in pursuit of quality, and this eastern exposure hillside vineyard always looks impeccable. Crop levels are low, and careful positioning of the fruit allows more of the gentle morning sunlight to reach the grapes and less of the intense afternoon sun.

Wilson's Cabernet is always dense, often brooding, and generally has the most tannin of my different Cabernet lots, but those tannins are ripe and mouth-filling and are balanced by the richness and dimension of the rest of the wine. A similar comment can be made about the oak. Although aged in 70% new oak, the depth of the wine keeps the oak in check so there is never a sense of "oakiness."

The nearly opaque wine is ruby/purple and the nose leaps out with a classic cassis, anise, and sweet vanilla nose. The aromas carry into the flavors of the full-bodied mouth that continue into a spicy finish. Everything points to an alignment that will allow this wine to age a decade or more.

This is my \$100 wine at half the price!