

2006 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY CABERNET SAUVIGNON



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Vineyards: Truchard Vineyard
Rancho Chimiles
Stewart Vineyard

Composition: 85% Cabernet Sauvignon
10% Cabernet Franc
5% Merlot

Harvest Dates: Sept. 25, 29 Oct. 18, 23
Fermentation: 10 days, up to 85°

Maceration: 12 days average, up to 82°

Oak aging: 18 months
100% French Oak 60% new

Bottling Date: May 8, 2008

Production: 1600 cases 750ml

It has honestly sneaked up on me. This is my 30th harvest in Napa Valley and in each of those years I have dealt with Cabernet Sauvignon. It is a resilient variety, and the challenge is not so much as to how to make good wine, but rather how to make delicious, palatable, and distinctive wine that is enjoyable to drink. So much of the market is driven toward a massive and ponderous style that may knock you over the head, but for me does not offer a great deal of pleasure. Pleasure is always my driving force and challenge.

I began working with Terry Wilson and his vineyard, Rancho Chimiles in 1996. The vineyard is in the southeast corner of Napa, just south of Stags Leap, and provides grapes for some very highly regarded wineries in Napa. His Cabernet Sauvignon is typically muscular, dense and concentrated with consistent quality year after year and provides an excellent backbone for the style of wine we aim for.

My delight in working with Truchard Vineyards continues. For those who think flat and foggy Carneros, they are surprised to learn that the northern boundary of the appellation—where Truchard is located—is quite different. Rolling hills and less fog provides an ideal environment for Bordeaux reds. The Cabernet Sauvignon from this region tends to add softness, acidity, and forward, almost floral notes to the final blend. Hang time for Cabernet in Carneros is typically longer and is generally the last fruit of the season that we harvest.

2006 literally began with incredible rains and flooding. The rest of winter was long and wet, resulting in late bud-break and bloom. A record-breaking heat wave in July stressed the vines some more. Warm dry winds in the latter part of September pushed harvest into fall swing, although for most it typically began a couple of weeks later than normal.

In contrast to the 2005 which was a little more brooding a year ago, the 2006 offers a very pretty, forward, and spicy nose of cinnamon, clove, plum, and black cherry. My notes say warm, enticing, and generous. I go back to this wine often—there is an elusiveness and intrigue that are always hallmarks of the wines I enjoy. The mouth is balanced and restrained, with an edginess that should sustain the wine for quite some time.

This is not a wine to ponder over. It is one to drink and enjoy!