

2002 Poetry Cabernet Sauvignon Stags Leap District

One one-hundredth of the Napa Valley appellation in size, the Stags Leap District is noted for producing wines with a pronounced silkiness and supple tannin structure. A combination of well-drained, rocky soils warmed by afternoon sun and cooled by the nearby San Pablo Bay produce expressive fruit with this small appellation's signature velvet-smooth texture.

VINTAGE

Although the vines got off to a slightly later-than-average start due to a cool spring, the shoot growth was healthy in April and flowering proceeded evenly in May. Moderate temperatures throughout the season promoted even ripening and full flavor development of a balanced crop. August heat spells accelerated ripening for a time, but excellent weather through September and October allowed for exceptionally long hang time and complete ripeness. The Cabernet harvest stretched out from September 25th to October 21st and was well paced (unlike Merlot which seemed to come in fast and furious).

VINEYARD

Fruit was sourced from the steep hillside terraces of our Poetry vineyard at the northeastern boundary of the Stags Leap District. Eight vineyard blocks (comprising a wide range of rootstocks, clonal selections and trellis systems) were included in this blend, providing a diversity of flavors and nuances. Exceptional farming practices and low yields, just one ton to the acre average, combine ensure the vineyards potential is delivered to the winery.

WINEMAKING

Hand harvested into small 35-pound boxes beginning mid September with Merlot and ending in late October with Cabernet Sauvignon, the grapes were hand sorted and destemmed into small stainless steel tanks for a two to four-day pre-fermentation cold soak. A two-week fermentation with twice-daily pumpovers gently extracted flavor and color from the cap. The wine underwent extended maceration for up to two weeks to further integrate the tannins and develop texture. After a gentle pressing the wine was drained into French oak barrels (75% new) to complete malolactic fermentation and was aged in barrel for 20 months. Thirty-four barrels were hand selected for the blend which was bottled unfinned and unfiltered to preserve the wine's inherent balance and textural depth.

ANALYSIS

Composition: 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc, 3% Malbec, 2% Petit Verdot

Alcohol: 14.5%
T.A: 5.8g/l
pH: 3.57

Bottled: July 2004
Release: October 2005

Production: 775 cases