2014 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton, January 2017

INTRODUCTION

Year in and year out, great vineyards produce great wine. It’s really that simple. At our fingertips in this twenty-first century, we have subsurface soil mapping, infrared aerial photography, and a whole host of other techniques and toys that quantify that seemingly simple fact. However, it’s amazing when one realizes that it probably all began in the Napa Valley with a handful of dirt, old-fashioned gut instinct, and the desire to try something other than walnuts or pasture. The farmers who got it right are the ones who are still around today and are the ones we worked with in creating this wine. Most of them don’t know or care about the alluvial fan in the soil beneath their feet or the canopy density at the edge of the hill. They’ve just known for years that the vines east of the tall, live Oak need a bit more attention. They know every single vine and treat them just a little bit differently. It’s that dedication to touch and feel, the attention to detail in both the vineyard and in the winery that allowed us to express the unique character of this classic wine.

VINTAGE WEATHER

The weather in 2014 couldn’t have been better. With persistent questions of long-term drought lingering, the mild, cool spring that materialized eased those concerns as the growing season stretched into a moderately warm, pleasant summer. The textbook conditions allowed the vines to set a bumper crop. But with careful canopy management and an eye on the forecast, we had the luxury of thinning as needed to yield optimal ripeness as harvest began in late August and continued steadily into October.

NOSE

The nose is classic Napa Valley, filled with juicy blackberries, rich cocoa, and cassis. After a few moments, dried cherry and a touch of tobacco come into focus along with some wispy notes of fresh violets.

PALATE

Density and concentration sum up the palate nicely as tight-grained tannin is interwoven among layers of fresh raspberry, mint, and hazelnut. These slowly transition to a subtle richness of molasses and fig that’s almost chewy enough to sink your teeth into.

FINISH

The finish is seamless and complementary to the palate with strawberry jam, Earl Grey tea, and bright, refreshing acidity that should pair equally well with light fare or hardy cuisine.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATES
September 11 - October 9

ALCOHOL
14.2%

BLEND
86% Cabernet Sauvignon
13% Merlot, 1% Cabernet Franc

BARREL AGING
16 months, French and Eastern European oak, 27% new

BOTTLING DATE
April 2016

WINEMAKER
Matt Crafton

RELEASE DATE
March 2017

1429 Tubbs Lane · Calistoga, California 94515 · Tel 707-942-5105 · Fax 707-942-4221 · www.Montelena.com
2014 Napa Valley Chardonnay

Notes from the Winemaker, Matt Crafton, July 2016

INTRODUCTION

The 2014 vintage was sunny, just warm enough, and bountiful – the fundamental, or at least superficial, criteria for a “great” vintage. The truth, naturally, is more complex and, while no one ever complains about beautiful weather and a bumper crop, we tend to look at vintage characteristics a bit differently. If there are good or great vintages, then there necessarily must be bad vintages and I think these sorts of blanket statements are hyperbole at best. Just as any good chef will tell you that nature doesn’t make bad ingredients, we see the trends, challenges and idiosyncrasies of each vintage as an opportunity to decode our soil, our vineyard, and our region through the lens of our fruit. It’s this perspective and our inherent intellectual or creative curiosity that sets us apart as the details and nuances of each growing season are what make each year special and unique in its own right, and thus the final wines “great.”

VINTAGE WEATHER

After a dry winter and mild spring, we did get one substantial rain event before budbreak to saturate the soil profile for the beginning of the growing season. However, drought conditions dominated overall necessitating precise applications of water, which allowed the vines to maintain sufficient stress but still ripen slowly and methodically throughout the summer warmth. The temperatures remained relatively cool at night propelling harvest to an early but not record-setting start as all of the Chardonnay was picked over a roughly two week period from late August to early September.

NOSE
Ripe peach, pear and cloves dominate the nose amidst a flurry of floral and honeysuckle notes.

PALATE
There’s a wonderful fullness and weight on the palate punctuated by ripe melon, green apple, and fresh citrus. The oak contribution remains subtle with a hint of vanilla and baking spice.

FINISH
The density of the wine is readily apparent as grilled pineapple, lychee, and a rich creaminess linger.

Technical Information

HARVEST DATE
August 25 to September 8, 2014

ALCOHOL
13.6%

BLEND
100% Chardonnay

BARREL AGING
10 months in French Oak

BOTTLING DATE
July 27 to August 7, 2015

RELEASE DATE
October 1, 2016

WINEMAKER
Matt Crafton