

CHAPPELLET



VINEYARD

1996 "SIGNATURE" CABERNET SAUVIGNON

VINTAGE NOTES, Winemaker Phillip Corallo-Titus

VINTAGE:

Following bud break in 1996, it was apparent that most vineyards had fewer than normal clusters per vine. Unusually hot spring weather turned to rain and cold as the vines went into bloom. This weather pattern further decreased the crop by lowering the fruit set. The return of hot summer weather quickly ripened the small crop to exceptionally high sugar levels in September.

VITICULTURE:

As always, the "Signature" Cabernet Sauvignon is produced entirely from estate grown grapes from Chappellet's hillside vineyards on the eastern slope of Napa Valley. In 1996, the average age of the vines was 31 years old. The dry, rocky soils and lack of irrigation restrict the vines to low yields of intensely-flavored fruit. On each vine, leaves are removed from around the grape clusters, and shoots are trellised and tied into a vertical position so that each cluster is fully exposed to the sun. This technique allows the fruit to fully ripen and produce a wine with more intense varietal character and soft, mature tannins.

VINIFICATION:

The grapes are fermented in stainless steel tanks and then aged in a combination of French and American oak barrels for a total of 20 months, during which time the wine is raked every four months for aroma and tannin development. After the first 6 months of aging, the "Signature" blend is determined by selecting the most concentrated and full-bodied lots of Cabernet Sauvignon. The wine is then barrel-aged for an additional 14 months to allow the components to integrate.

WINE PROFILE:

AROMAS:

Rich blend of jammy berry fruit and chocolate balanced by hints of vanilla, spice and toasted oak. Well developed and forward in character.

FLAVORS:

The concentrated, fleshy taste of ripe black cherry predominates with undertones of cassis and sweet oak. Well-integrated tannins envelop a dense core of fruit for a smooth, balanced mouth-feel and long, resonating finish.

TECHNICAL DATA:

Blend: 95% Cabernet Sauvignon
5% Merlot

Ta: 5.7 g/l

pH: 3.71

Alcohol: 14.1%

Bottling Date: July 1998

Production: 4,000 cases