



CHAPPELLET

The Chappellet Estate Vineyard

Great wines reflect the complexity and character of great vineyards, as well as the vision, passion and patience of those who farm them. Rising from 800 to 1,800 feet above sea level, the Chappellet Estate Vineyard on Pritchard Hill has earned global acclaim for yielding grapes that produce mountain-grown wines of rare depth, longevity and elegance.

Since 1967, the Chappellets have been dedicated stewards of this land, working to honor the natural integrity of Pritchard Hill, while constantly evolving their techniques to achieve the site's full, expressive potential. In practice, this stewardship has manifested itself in three key areas—a respect for the natural variation of Pritchard Hill, a constant refinement of viticultural practices based on years of experience, and a committed focus on sustainable and organic farming methods.

Hailed as “Napa’s Grand Cru” and recognized as one of the world’s preeminent sites for growing Bordeaux varietals—in particular Cabernet Sauvignon—the roots of Pritchard Hill’s greatness date back four million years, when a 14,000-foot volcano dominated what is now the eastern range of the Napa Valley. Erosion, water, wind and sun have combined to sculpt this area over the millennia, leaving Pritchard Hill with its array of dramatic slopes and thin, volcanic soils.

With a variety of elevations, exposures and soil types, which include varying depths of Sobrante loam and Hambright rock outcrop, Pritchard Hill presents a rare tapestry of growing conditions and micro-climates. To honor this diversity, the Chappellet family and Director of Vineyard Operations Andrew Opatz guide Chappellet’s dedicated year-round vineyard team to farm the mountainside as 47 distinctive blocks—including 40 blocks of Cabernet Sauvignon. Specific varietals, clones and rootstocks have been selected for each block, based on a complex understanding of each individual site. This emphasis on diversity as opposed to uniformity results in an expansive palette of fruit—including ten different Cabernet clones—from which to blend Chappellet’s wines. As a result, even during challenging vintages the site always has blocks of fruit that excel.

In addition to their pioneering work in the area of high-elevation vineyard planting, the Chappellets have long been advocates of more environmentally conscious farming methods. Beginning in the early 1980s (long before the term sustainable was ever used), Chappellet was one of the first wineries to plant cover crops as a method for soil conservation and erosion prevention. This early adoption of practices such as no-till farming has evolved into a comprehensive program of sustainable techniques used to eliminate the use of synthetic chemicals. These techniques include the use of cover crops, bird boxes, on-site composting, beneficial insect releases, and organic fertilizers. As a result, the Chappellet vineyard achieved organic certification from California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF) in 2012. Adding to the integrity and health of the site, only 104 of the property’s 640 total acres are planted as vineyards, meaning a large expanse of uncultivated land surrounds the vineyards with a natural buffer of beautiful forests and meadows that protect the plants from unwanted pests and chemicals.

Embodying the hard work of two generations, winegrowing on Pritchard Hill reflects an intimate relationship between the Chappellet family and a spectacular vineyard property. From the vineyard team’s commitment to low yields and meticulous canopy management to the family’s belief in regular replanting to augment quality, the cultivation of Chappellet’s vineyard has produced some of California’s most profound mountain-grown Cabernet Sauvignons. Of the vineyard’s 104 planted acres, 85 acres are Cabernet Sauvignon, with the remainder consisting of small blocks of Malbec, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Chenin Blanc.