



STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS 1999 FAY VINEYARD

Vineyard ~ This is our tenth release of a FAY Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, and the evolution of the vineyard is becoming increasingly apparent. When we acquired the vineyard from Nathan Fay in 1986, it already had a glorious history: it was the first Cabernet Sauvignon planting in what is now the Stags Leap District, and it was also the vineyard whose fruit displayed such depth and balance that it inspired the planting of S.L.V., on adjoining land. Our first decade of farming FAY was spent learning the nuances of the microclimates, studying the varied soils, and experimenting with the right match of weather, land, and viticultural practice. The alluvial fans that once drained the Stags Leap Palisade striate the property, ultimately leading to Chase Creek, a tributary of the Napa River. While volcanic rock born of the fiery origins of the Vaca Range is present, the balance of volcanic and alluvial earth is different than in neighboring S.L.V., with greater representation of the rich, waterborne alluvial soils. This mix gives the fruit from FAY a special character, distinct from S.L.V. and neighboring properties. The vines planted by Stag's Leap Wine Cellars from 1987 to the mid-1990s are now reaching peak maturity, and meticulous spring pruning and improved canopy management are bringing the flavors attained by the fruit to new levels of intensity. Our labor-intensive vineyard practices have coaxed an increased bounty from FAY and allowed us to increase our production slightly. In addition, the quality of the FAY fruit has contributed new elements to the CASK 23 proprietary blend, pushing that wine to new heights as well.

Vintage ~ Delayed vine development initiated by a cool spring continued throughout the summer and through the second week of September. Then storm clouds arrived to stir things up a bit. After ominous rolls of thunder, the clouds delivered only a light dusting of rain and then peeled away. Temperatures increased steadily, sometimes breaking the 100°Fahrenheit barrier. As the vine leaves folded away from the sun, they pulled water out of the berries, concentrating sugar and acid-but full flavor had not yet been achieved. Careful maintenance and irrigation nursed the clusters along to physiological ripeness, and acid levels held, supporting fruit and texture. Our vine-by-vine harvesting methods ensured that fruit was picked only when it was completely ready.

Wine ~ Compared to the classically structured S.L.V., FAY wines are typically more extroverted and voluptuous, and that holds true for the 1999 vintage. The nose is filled with cassis, black cherry, and vanilla. But any expectation that this is just another fruity Cabernet is dispelled when your lips touch the glass and you encounter the wine's full statement of cassis ringed by dried cranberry, raspberry and plum, woven through with a ribbon of rich caramel. Taste again, and the cassis switches into a different key as your mouth fills with jammy fruit and anise, followed by a long finish perfumed with sandalwood and spice. FAY has worked its seductive powers yet again. Pair it with a traditional duck civet: duck slowly braised in red wine with shallots and root vegetables.

Harvest Dates ~ September 24 - October 9

Harvest Brix ~ 24.9°(weighted average)

Appellation ~ 100% Stags Leap District

Blend ~ 96% Cabernet Sauvignon,
3.5% Merlot, 0.5% Petit Verdot

Titrateable Acid ~ 0.54g/100ml

Barrel Aging ~ 22 months French oak

pH ~ 3.71

Total Cases ~ 3,893 cases

Release Date ~ October 1, 2002