

# SPOTTSWOODE

Harvest 2020

## Lydenhurst Cabernet Sauvignon

*By Aron Weinkauff, Winemaker*

EACH VINTAGE, the growing of the fruit for our Lydenhurst Cabernet Sauvignon is approached as a collaboration with a handful of acclaimed family-owned vineyards throughout the Napa Valley. Each site is selected to contribute something unique and special to the final wine. As part of these relationships, we strive to work with organically farmed sites – and we have incentivized our grower partners to transition to organic farming.

The growing season began with a very dry winter that extended into early 2020, resulting in dry soils and water deficits during budbreak, which began on April 2 at our Spottswode Estate Vineyard in St. Helena. This was followed by bloom on May 18, as well as a welcome 1.5 inches of rain in May, which provided a short reprieve for the vines. While we historically don't irrigate in the spring, 2020 put us in the unusual position of having weak cane growth and needing to irrigate once bloom was complete. Our dilemma was whether to use our finite water resources to irrigate early or wait until later. As soon as bloom was complete, we chose to apply highly targeted irrigation in select blocks to encourage more growth. Overall, while 2020 was quite hot, measuring 4,026 in growing degree days for the entire year (one of our highest totals ever for St. Helena), the heat was relatively constant throughout summer, with very few radical heat spikes until Labor Day, when temperatures reached 116 degrees, giving many of the grapes one last big push toward ripeness. Knowing that this was coming, we proactively irrigated before the heat spike, and used our normal shade cloth practices.

Because we tend to harvest our grapes somewhat earlier than many in order to ensure balance and freshness in our wines, on September 15 we began picking Cabernet Sauvignon from our Spottswode Estate Vineyard and both the Merlot and Malbec used for Lydenhurst from the organically farmed Young Inglewood Vineyard in St. Helena. These grapes – which were co-fermented – showed plush tannins and juicy concentration. The next site picked was the half-acre Mowe (formerly Parry) Vineyard, which produced an exceptional lot of Cabernet with just the right hint of pyrazine notes. After a brief respite, we harvested Cabernet Sauvignon from the organically farmed Rahn Vineyard on Howell

– More –

A Family Wine Estate



Spottswode Estate Vineyard & Winery • St. Helena CA • 707/963-0134 • spottswode.com



Mountain on September 25, which yielded grapes with great power and structure. We finished harvest on September 26 with the final picks from our Spottswoode Estate and at the Darms Lane Vineyard in Oak Knoll – a more southern location that produced grapes with excellent acidity and soaring red-berry flavors.

Fortuitously, all of the fruit for our 2020 Lydenhurst was in the winery before the start of the Glass Fire on September 27. While our overall yields for the vintage were down by 25% to 30% due to the small berries and clusters resulting from the drought conditions, the quality and concentration of the fruit was exceptional. Though we were spared any impact from the Glass Fire, we were mindful of potential issues from the LNU Complex Fire, which burned in parts of eastern Napa County from August into early October. To ensure quality, we sent samples of every lot of wine for smoke analysis over the course of the wine's production and *élevage* to labs in both Australia and British Columbia. No significant levels of any smoke compounds (free or bound) were found. We also did extensive sensory testing, which provided further assurances as to the phenomenal quality of the 2020 Lydenhurst.

Despite the pandemic and wildfires that made 2020 one of our most challenging vintages ever, the final wine is one that we are very proud and confident to share with our customers. Defined by its alluring freshness and energy, and its soaring red-fruit flavors, it is a wine that overdelivers in every way, combining youthful appeal with graceful balance and richness.

– End –

A Family Wine Estate



Spottswoode Estate Vineyard & Winery • St. Helena CA • 707/963-0134 • spottswoode.com

