

# SPOTTSWOODE

A Family Wine Estate



## Harvest 2022

### Spottswode Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

By Aron Weinkauff, Winemaker

WHILE the third consecutive year of drought resulted in yields that were down by as much as 30% for our Bordeaux varietals, the fruit for our 2022 Spottswode Estate Cabernet arrived in the winery in excellent condition, with ideal natural acidity, lovely aromatics, graceful tannins, and pure, focused flavors. We received some much-needed rain in November and December of 2021. Unfortunately, the rains did not continue into January and February, which were quite warm and completely dry. With record-low early season rainfall, there was very little water in the root systems of the vines, which was a main contributing factor to the low yields of the vintage. Even though we received some modest precipitation in March, it was not enough to meet our water needs and we proactively irrigated before budbreak on March 18. Another irrigation was scheduled for after budbreak, but the arrival of modest rains in April and May helped to saturate the root zones and prepared the plants for a more “normal” remainder of the year.

Bloom at our 140-year-old, biodynamic- and organic-certified Spottswode Estate Vineyard was normal and healthy, beginning on May 4 and concluding just over a week later, on May 12. Due to the overall lack of rain and moderate temperatures, there was no mildew pressure in the vineyard. The growing season was remarkably even and temperate until August, with no noteworthy heat spikes. As a result, the grapes were able to ripen slowly while preserving the natural acidity that is so important for our wines. In early August, Napa Valley experienced a three-day heat event with temperatures reaching 106° F. While the heat caused no damage to the vines, sugar accumulation plateaued for a little over a week as the plants paused in their development. The temperatures stayed warm thereafter, but the high heat subsided for the next month until it became clear that we were going to experience a major heat event around Labor Day. In advance of the heat, we began picking a small number (5%) of our most at-risk blocks, including our most youthful vines and the shallow-soiled sections of the vineyard. We had our shade cloth in place to protect

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the plants and, as always, we had retained all foliage in our canopies to shade the grapes. At the same time, employing knowledge gained during previous hot vintages, we applied deep irrigation to the vineyard in advance of the heat wave.

These practices, along with the inherent health and vitality of our vineyard from our long-term organic and biodynamic farming practices, proved invaluable during a major heat event that saw ten days of temperatures above 100° F beginning on September 4. The heat was followed by a much-needed cool down, as well as 1.5 inches of rain, which in combination with supplemental irrigation was extremely beneficial for the vines. After a brief pause following the rain, we began harvesting the fruit in multiple small picks, evaluating the ripeness and quality of each block individually. This ultimately resulted in four mini-harvests at Spottswode Estate, which made for a positive work environment, with no more than six tanks fermenting at any given time. By the third week of September almost our entire vineyard had been picked, with the final fruit arriving in the winery on September 23. While the heat in the run-up to harvest meant we could not let all of our blocks hang as long as we may have wished, overall we were thrilled with the quality. Not only did we not lose any fruit due to cluster collapse or dehydration, but also our vines remained healthy and green throughout harvest – both of which we attribute to the vitality of our vineyard due to regenerative, biodynamic, and organic farming. As a result, there is a structure and elegant complexity to our 2022 Spottswode Estate Cabernet Sauvignon that is both dynamic and graceful, with pure, varietal flavors and a lovely underlying energy.

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