



Herb Lamb Vineyards 2003 E II Cabernet Sauvignon

Tasting Notes

Winemaker Michael Trujillo calls the 2003 vintage “The year of finesse, as wines from this vintage as a whole are not as muscular as the 2002. The cooler 2003 vintage brings out the blueberry and lighter red fruits in the E II, but there is still a great concentration and intensity of flavors and colors”. This wine shows rich, juicy, fruit flavors of black raspberries, spicy espresso, cocoa and cherry highlights from the field blend of Merlot inter-planted in the “The Bottom 40”. Although the wine is aged in French oak barrels from Taransaud and Nadalie, only a small portion is new, so the oak is well integrated into the flavors.

Because we have been able to watch the grapes and subsequent wines from our hillside vineyard since 1991, we recognize the potential of each different row and block of the vineyard. Although yields in general were less than previous vintages, in 2003 the blocks that were used primarily for the E II wine were given added character when blended with the light pressing of the HL Cabernet Sauvignon (our signature wine), so we were able to produce 100 cases. The cooler growing season also helped to maintain the great acid balance in this wine, giving it potential to age for several years. Typically, the E II Napa Valley Red Wine usually doesn't start to roll out the richness until it matures about a year in the bottle, so by the fall of 2006 this wine should really start to blossom... if you can wait that long.



Winemaking Notes

The St. Helena Star reported that spring of 2003 “has gone from the mildly irksome to record-breaking annoying as the cold and wet weather simply refuses to quit”, stalling grape berry development and maturation through the cool, wet spring. Even summer temperatures continued to give worry with spikes of heat and cold, making beach time a hit-or-miss option. At this rate, the formula for ideally ripened grapes looked like it was going to put harvest in 2003 sometime between Thanksgiving and Christmas!

But in the end, brilliant fall weather helped to salvage a difficult year. Cabernet Sauvignon in general, and especially in our Herb Lamb Vineyard at the base of Howell Mountain, is a later ripening varietal, so we were lucky that the rain held off and warm temperatures continued throughout the end of October. A three week stretch of 80-90 degree weather helped our grapes finally achieve ripe flavors and supple tannins, and we harvested the main block (Big H Block) on October 25 and the smaller block (J Block) and “The Bottom 40” on Halloween, (just in time to go trick-or-treating door-to-door with a wine glass, an old St. Helena tradition!)

Production and Technical Data

Production:	101 cases
Composition/Blend:	100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Vineyards:	Herb Lamb Vineyards
Appellation:	Napa Valley
Barrels:	80% New French Oak
Alcohol:	14.2%