



## 2005 – 2012 Two Old Dogs Cabernet Sauvignon Retrospective



In celebration of recently bottling the 2012 vintage of Cabernet Sauvignon, over a bountiful Wine Country luncheon with four winemakers, Jennifer and Herb opened a mini-vertical of the previous eight vintages of their "Companion Label" E II and Two Old Dogs Cabernet Sauvignon. From the cooler and more shaded sections of the Herb Lamb Vineyards in the foothills of Howell Mountain, these wines are made with 50% new oak barrels and are lighter in style, with more red fruits, and can be enjoyed sooner. All of these wines were indicative of the signature vineyard aromas of wild mint, tobacco, menthol, licorice with fruit flavors of cherry, raspberry and blueberry with degrees of depth and intensity reflecting the seasonal growing conditions. With time in the glass and in the bottle, these wines have (and will continue to) become very interesting and more balanced and a joy to drink.

Winemaker Michael Trujillo was impressed with the tasting. "These wines are all redolent of the cooler climate, north-eastern facing hillside vineyard sections that take longer to mature than the HL block. Knowing how hard we had to work in some of the cooler vintages, I am amazed at how well structured they are and how beautifully they are evolving in the bottle. The Two Old Dogs Cabs tend to be leaner and greener in their youth, but have grown into savory and plush wines that deserve a great meal with good company."

**2005 E II Cabernet Sauvignon** - Still bright and crisp, this wine gets your attention right away. There is a signature aroma of wild mint, tobacco, menthol found throughout the wines from this section of the vineyard. The structure and acidity is still strong, with lots of fruit that is at once chewy but still juicy. The overall balance is one of good acids and savory flavors. Drink now to 3-5 years. The 2005 E II Cabernet Sauvignon would be perfect complement to a light dinner of salmon or lamb chops.

**2006 E II Cabernet Sauvignon** - This wine was the ringer. Shy to open up, the nose is very closed at first, but the longer it is in the glass the more it reveals itself. In the nose are rich soy sauce/caramel notes, and in the mouth, the flavors are still bright and crisp. It is very forward in the palate showing some dark and brooding fruit flavors. While this wine takes a while to really express itself, it gets better each time you come back to it, becoming plush and more complex as it opens up. The 2006 E II Cabernet Sauvignon is real keeper and one of the favorites of the tasting. Drink now or age for 3-5 years.

**2007 E II Cabernet Sauvignon** - In the nose, it shows spicy ginger snap/vanilla wafer with menthol and toasty oak flavors. The ripeness of this vintage is expressed in the black cherry and black raspberry fruit, creating a flush and lush wine. There is good acid, making the wine bright and full bodied, with good oak integration. This wine is typical of the vineyard style; a little greener when young but the higher acid holds it together longer, and the blue and red fruit shines in this wine. The over ripeness and plushness of this vintage says drink earlier than later, although it's still a youthful wine and can age another 5-6 years.

**2008 Two Old Dogs Cabernet Sauvignon** - More than the previous vintages, this wine shows dense chocolate, cocoa powder in the nose, and is also plusher on the palate. It is sweet in the nose, like a Heath Bar or salt water taffy. It tastes like a big, juicy blueberry tart. This growing season on this vintage gave us some of the highest pHs of all the wines, which created a different style to this vintage than the others, but it has become a very nicely balanced wine. Drink now or hold for 2-5 years.

**2009 Two Old Dogs Cabernet Sauvignon** - Initially, there is a menthol greenness on the nose, showing shoe polish and chocolate mint familiar to the vineyard style. But in the mouth there is a big body and good length to this wine. It has a good core of blue and red fruit and a solid structure. It shows more old world flavors of earth and leather yet is still austere. With the best structure of the last few wines, this was another favorite of the tasting. Drink now or hold for 4-6 years.

**2010 Two Old Dogs Cabernet Sauvignon** - This cool vintage wine became expressive with a dill and herbal nose with lots of oak overtones. There are good vanillin oak characteristics, but also the typical herbal chocolate mint and blue fruit flavors of the vineyard. This wine has good structure now, but because the oak tannins are still strong the wine needs time, as all elements have not yet melded. Wait - it will only get better. Drink in 4 - 6 years.

**2011 Two Old Dogs Cabernet Sauvignon** - From the coolest vintage on record, the nose shows anise and licorice and a little blue fruit with the vineyard signature of menthol and licorice. The flavors are of peppermint, sweet raspberry and chocolate mint, but with the addition of 12% Merlot, it also is smooth and spicy with dried cherry nuances. At a year in the bottle, the wine has rounded the corner and shed a lot of its youthful greenness. This wine is getting nice and round with a good oak balance and a fruity finish. It will be a lovely, but lighter body, wine, getting better as it ages. It is soft and approachable now but the flavors will continue to meld and it will mature nicely with a few years in the bottle. This vintage was unique, with the addition of Merlot and the cool weather and rain cutting ripening short, but it stands out in a good way as a very respectable wine. Drink in 3-5 years.

**2012 Two Old Dogs Cabernet Sauvignon** - This was an amazing vintage, partly because it was such a contrast to the 2011 vintage which was so cool and wet, but mostly because the vineyard ripened completely and at a normal pace, giving us luscious fruit. The ripe fruit is very prevalent and the structure is right on point. There is no herbalness or green flavors found in cooler vintages, although there is still a menthol/peppery character that is prevalent in all Two Old Dogs wines from the cooler sections of the vineyard. The fruit base is juicy, rich and solid, but well balanced by the brightness, like lemon rind, in the acid. To be released fall of 2014 or spring of 2015.