

T O R

TOR Cabernet Sauvignon To Kalon Vineyard, 2005

Vintage

When you examine all the statistical data, 2005 resembles the 1994 and 1991 vintages of recent history. They were all very, very long growing seasons with good crop levels, benign advantageous picking conditions, resulting in excellent dark wines. In a nutshell, if you were patient and dropped the right amount of fruit (up to 50% on some sites) to put your vines in balance, 2005 was a great year for most Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvigno

The year started out with heavy rain, but a dry spell in March put bud break right on time. May and June were wet months with up to 8" falling in many of the vineyards. July was warm, before we settled into a long cool growing season that lasted well into November for our Cabernet harvest. This extremely long hang time developed very mature flavors and dark colors, but at lower alcohol levels than 2001-2004. I was quoted in a futures tasting article for the *Wine Spectator* as saying the vintage was "Bordeaux-like." I'll add to that, "Bordeaux-like in a great year."

Vineyard

To Kalon has it all – pedigree, history, location. Andy Beckstoffer owns this vineyard in the heart of the Oakville appellation and has planted it to many clones of Cabernet Sauvignon. Having tasted dozens of wines produced from the myriad blocks in the vineyard over many years, I can say they have a commonality, but are also distinctly different. What distinguishes them most is a soil and clones. Their commonality is their lush, round, luxurious mouth feel, and the sexy pure Cabernet cassis flavors. The soils in the more western blocks tend to be less fertile than the front blocks. Clone 6 is certainly one the shyest bearing clones (if not the shyest) in the vineyard. So, our block is all clone 6 in the far western part of the vineyard. This is a taste of heaven, if you love a big, rich Cabernet Sauvignon.

Winemaking

Our philosophy has been to let great vineyards produce great wines. We stay out of the way – our approach could be described as minimalist winemaking. The grapes are picked cold at the first light of morning, and crushed cold at the winery shortly thereafter. The 'must' is presoaked till its indigenous yeast begins metabolizing grape sugars and starts the winemaking process. We closely monitor flavors, color, and extracts during fermentation. We use all French oak coopers, predominately Taransaud Chateau for our Cabernet Sauvignon barrels. The 2005s were aged in these 20 gallon custom barrels with minimal racking for a total of 21 months.

The Wine

This is our first from this vineyard, and 2005 is a great vintage on which to start a long-lasting romance. "Seamless" is the first word that comes to mind as a descriptor for this wine, then add all that wonderful To Kalon magic: black cherry, licorice, wild current, ripe Cabernet. To quote Tanzer from the *International Wine Cellar*, "Wonderfully sweet, mouth-filling and generous, with outstanding depth to the black fruit, mineral and floral flavors. This boasts superb strength of material and great sweetness and fullness... a great showing today."



"A magnificent effort, the 2005 Cabernet Sauvignon Beckstoffer To Kalon Vineyard is reminiscent of a Bordeaux Pauillac. Cedar wood, crème de cassis, licorice and spice box aromas soar from the glass of this opaque ruby/purple-colored cuvee. With fabulous fruit, intensity, full-bodied power, authoritative richness, and multiple flavor dimensions, this is a blockbuster Cabernet Sauvignon that should drink well for 20+ years."

Rated 96 by
Robert Parker,
Jr., "*The Wine
Advocate*"