

TOR

TOR Cabernet Sauvignon Mast Vineyard, 2006

Vintage

On New Years Day, 2006, many of Napa Valley's dormant vines went underwater due to one of the wettest storms in memory. Luckily, in a few days, everything was back to normal except for some annoying clean up. Gentle spring storms kept the vineyards damp resulting in a slightly late bud break. Finally, the weather cleared, the fruit set was healthy and above normal, which lead us to multiple thinning during the growing season. In mid-July a blast of heat had many thinking we were headed into an early harvest. Mother Nature fooled us again with very cool weather well into the first week of October, slowing sugar development. Our first significant storm came in early October followed by an extended "Indian summer". After such a roller-coaster ride, our Cabernet blocks were picked, with almost perfect flavors and numbers. We picked Mast vineyard on October 30th in the mornings first light.

Vineyard

This vineyard was first planted in 1972 by the Mast family on their estate in the Napa Valley. It is south of the Dominus vineyard in the Yountville appellation and has sloped, western hills. The soils, like many of the better vineyards with similar orientation, have much rock and are well drained. It is planted to Clone 337. We like our specific block that is in the rockiest section. Curiously, I have tracked this vineyard for two decades, noticing a unique microclimate that develops late in the growing season. When the entire neighboring western facing, benched vineyards find shade as the sun drops lower on the horizon, Mast finds a gap in the western hill and holds light and heat longer. Unique terroir.

Winemaking

In 2006 we had to do very little work sorting grapes in the winery and vineyard. The quality of uniformly high, little dehydration, or green grapes. After morning crushing, the must was presoaked till the indigenous yeast began to slowly metabolize grape sugar, signaling a beginning of fermentation. For the Mast, soaks and fermentation lasted 24 days, when the juice was racked off directly into small Taransaud and Damey French oak barrels. After 18 months in small oak, the wine went to bottle unfiltered, unfinned. Net, net, minimal handling or intervention.

Winemaker's Tasting Notes

The color is a blood red/garnet with no lightening at the rim. On the nose there is a blast of ripe boysenberry, cherry, earth, peppermint and cloves. On the palate this wine has a wonderfully palate coating entry with firm but sweet tannins that reach all the way to the back of the palate, roasted meat juices, blackberry, bitter sweet dark chocolate and acidity that serves to carry the flavors to all parts of the palate and extend the length on the wine. This is immediately approachable but has the stuffing to hold in the cellar for years.



"Exhibits terrific ripeness, loads of upfront fruit, and a heady mouthfeel."

Rated 92-94 by Robert M. Parker, Jr., "The Wine Advocate"