

TOR

N A P A V A L L E Y

TIERRA ROJA VINEYARD CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2017

VINEYARD Drive the Oakville Cross Road to the Silverado Trail, then directly look forward and up. This is Tierra Roja, a four-acre jewel of a hillside vineyard. Great neighbors—Backus, Screaming Eagle, Maya, and Rudd. Dotted with big rocks, the soil is definitely roja (very red). You might expect the wines to be massive, but they are perfumed, dark, and complex, in the style of Screaming Eagle. Linda Neal has been tending this jewel of a vineyard since 1987. Today Neal sells her fruit to no other winery but ours. It was a long wait until we finally released our first TOR Tierra Roja Cabernet in 2010. We couldn't be happier working with this special fruit from a truly talented grower.

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WINEMAKING In 2017, for the first time we left our Cabernet Sauvignon from Tierra Roja Vineyard on skins post primary fermentation, since it just kept getting better and better. Also in this year, for the Tierra Roja designated bottling we selected 100% new Taransaud barrels that exhibited more of the dark fruits, espresso expression of the vineyard. The result is the most dense, structured, compelling and potentially long-lived Tierra Roja yet.

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WINEMAKER'S TASTING NOTES The most rigorous barrel selection we have ever made from this vineyard. For that reason, given the vintage and the strict barrel cepage, it might be our best Tierra Roja to date. I also think each vintage we know more about the vineyard and the unique wines it makes and we dig deeper and deeper to find its secrets. More dark fruits in this Tierra Roja than ones from the past, and again, it is multi-layered. This reminded us very much of recent vintages of Screaming Eagle and Bond St Eden. We looked for the dark fruits, more density and structure, more back fruits than previous vintages, serious, serious wine, as serious a Tierra Roja as we've made, more brooding, pure alluring, spicy, dried mediterranean herb, closer to Screaming Eagle, Bond St Eden.

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VINTAGE It will be one of those vintages that will be discussed for decades to come. The wines we made are beautiful, our highest-scoring Chardonnays to-date as well as Cabernets and Proprietary Reds that are reflective of great vintages, with early barrel scores into potential 100-point range. Our reds have excellent extract; layered, downright sexy wines that have the structure to live a long time. I taste the wines and marvel. It was a very wet spring, over 30 inches of rain in January and February alone. Spring bloom and set went smoothly and we rolled into the summer with heat spikes in July, late August, and early September. By early October all the Chardonnays were in and the Cabernets were reaching optimum maturity. We dropped a lot of fruit in 2017, a cluster per shoot in To Kalon, and in part because of this, we had all our fruit in by mid-October. Then came the fire, which had no influence on our wines, but changed all our lives. The wines themselves are rays of sunlight when I reflect on 2017.

95-97 Points – International Wine Report

CASES PRODUCED: 370

RETAIL BOTTLE PRICE: \$155

