

TOR

N A P A V A L L E Y

TIERRA ROJA VINEYARD

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2015

VINEYARD Drive the Oakville Cross Road to the Silverado Trail then look directly forward and up and you see Tierra Roja, a small four acre jewel of a hillside vineyard. Great neighbors – Backus, Screaming Eagle, Maya and Rudd. The vineyard is dotted with big rocks, and the soil is definitely roja (very red). You might expect the wines to be massive, but they are very perfumed, dark, and complex - more like Screaming Eagle than neighbor Dalla Valle.

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WINEMAKING The 2015 Tierra Roja was fermented in a closed top tank for almost 30 days with no more than two pump-overs a day, tapering off to one a day at the end. This stays on its skins a little longer than the mountain Cabernets since the tannins of the East Oakville hillsides are so sweet that there is no concern on over extraction. This is put into new Taransaud barrels for about 18-20 months before being bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

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WINEMAKER'S TASTING NOTES It sounds like a broken record but the 2015 Tierra Roja continues a run of amazing Cabernets off of this singular site in the Eastern Oakville hillsides. Anyone who looks at this site, be it winemakers or newbies, understands just why these wines are so amazing. The slope, exposure and red rocky soils are just like heaven to Cabernet. This always shows a wonderful mix of red and black fruits and has such tremendous balance that there is no real beginning, middle or end. It is just an impression of seamless sweet Cabernet fruit with a bright lifted earth profile allied with blackberry, cassis and blueberry. This is easily one of the most amazing sites a Napa Cabernet can come from, and the classic site where the goal is to just get out of the way and not screw it up.

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VINTAGE Over my decades as a Napa vintner I have gained great respect for “drought years.” They are yin and yang years, where a farmer has to pay very close attention to each vine. In years like 2015, every vine was pushed to the limit – its access to water, its survival. The survivors make up small crops - that is the “yin.” The “yang” is - the quality can be off the charts.

In 2015, we suffered up to 45% losses in several blocks. It was an early start, but cool weather during flowering in May contributed to a less than normal fruit set. The berries that did set were generally much smaller than usual. Once the set was complete, we had warm to very warm conditions up to and through harvest. There was no rush to judgement on when to pick, we had plenty of space at the winery for the short crop, and all the fruit was in before the winter storms started to line up off the coast. Initially, I did not pass judgement on this vintage; but now having tasted all the wines in bottle – it is a great one in all respects.

CASES PRODUCED: 225

