



2023 Black List XXXIX

Tasting Notes

Benefitting from moderate winter rainfall, and balanced temperatures throughout the 2023 growing season, the region enjoyed early bud break, followed by a cool spring that promoted even fruit development. Harvest began later than usual, allowing for optimal ripeness and flavor concentration. While yields ended up being slightly lower than average, the fruit quality proved exceptional with fine acidity levels and vibrant fruit characteristics.

It is rare when a wine invites comparisons to the creative impulses of William Shakespeare and Robert Plant. Forsooth, the parallels may be revealed between this 100% Cabernet ...and *both Stairway to Heaven* and ...*MacBeth*. To wit, the wine's ruby red hue glints amidst its near opacity. Fetching but demure on the nose, the wine gives off feints of dark fruit, cherry cola, and nutmeg. But as Will S and Led-Z have each opined, early appearances can be deceiving. Notwithstanding No. 39's early restraint, the wine exuberantly announces its attack (cue Jimmy Page's midway guitar solo) with black plum, cassis, dark cherry, sweet oak, finished with hints of graphite. Fermented in stainless steel tanks (individual lots) with an average of 3-days cold soak (24 days on skins), the wine is aged 20 months in 70% new French. The wine's mid-palate is handsomely structured, graced with silky tannins, light acidity, and pleasing weightiness on the palate.

And what of *Stairway to Heaven* ... & *Macbeth*? The duality within Black List XXXIX compels us to recall:

- "There's a sign on the wall, but she wants to be sure, 'cause you know sometimes words have two meanings." – **Stairway to Heaven, Led Zeppelin IV**
- "Fair is foul, and foul is fair..." – **MacBeth Act 1, Scene A**

The backbone of this notable Cabernet is built on gorgeous fruit from favored rows found amidst twenty micro-blocks sequestered on a prized 16-acre estate. The uniquely diverse soils and clonal selections make for resultant wines prized for their complexity and nuance. Situated on a gradual, west-facing slope in the Yountville appellation, the vineyard soils are largely alluvial layered over sandstone bedrock.

Winemaker: Philippe Melka, Bordeaux-bred (Chateau Haut Brion, Petrus) and heralded by Robert Parker as one of the top nine winemakers in the world. "Where possible, I will minimize winemaking techniques in the cellar so I can create a wine that tells the story of the vineyard. In the end, it must be about the fruit."

Wine Facts

Varietal Composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

Production: 150 cases

Vineyards: Yountville

Harvest Date: Oct.24th, 2023.

Cooperage: 70% new French oak (20 months): St. Martin, Francois Freres, Taransaud