

2017 Buehler Vineyards Papa's Knoll Cabernet Sauvignon

Historically, we've produced one Estate Cabernet Sauvignon at Buehler Vineyards in which we blend wines from various vineyard blocks: a melding of the disparate characteristics into one whole wine. From time to time, we're tempted to showcase a particular vineyard block for its unique character by bottling it on its own. Beginning with the 2004 vintage, we gave in to the temptation and bottled a very limited amount of wine from Papa's Knoll's vineyard which is only sold directly from the winery or through our wine club.

What is Papa's Knoll and where is it located? Named after the landform in front of "Papa's" (The late John Buehler, Sr.) house, this is our oldest vineyard block of Cabernet Sauvignon. The face of the knoll is steeply terraced with an easterly exposure; the top of the knoll is best described as a shallow bowl with no rim on the south side. This three acre block was planted in 1971 and is the only dry-farmed Cabernet block on the estate. The fact that we have to pay the pickers by the hour rather than by the ton to pick this block is testament to the ruggedness and inaccessibility of this block that routinely gives us little more than two tons of grapes per acre.

What differentiates the wines from Papa's Knoll from our other vineyard blocks? A few terms spring to mind: power, color, depth. If a dark, lushly textured, concentrated wine is your goal, this wine argues that dry-farming old vines is a good way to achieve it.

Papa's Knoll is typically the first block harvested off the Estate; dry-farming as well as the light-cropped nature of this block ensures that it delivers its bounty a full 7-20 days earlier than our other Estate blocks.

Tasting observations: The color is skewed to the blue end of the Cabernet spectrum and is opaque in nature. The aromas hint at black fruit: ripe black cherries and black plums. Enticing barrel qualities of cola spice and a hint of dried tarragon complement the fruit aromas.

The 2017 Napa Valley growing season began with record-setting amounts of rain through early April. Growers were challenged by the resulting vine vigor; what initially appeared to be a larger than average crop was tempered by subsequent weather in June. Foggy mornings combined with several heat spikes made for smaller clusters and so our crop ended up a little below average in terms of quantity in the end. Very high temperature the last week of August ensured that picking was under way by the second week of September. Temperatures then moderated and we able to complete the harvest at a more even-paced tempo. Fortunately, the catastrophic fires that began October 8 did not impact our wine; we finished harvesting our Papa's Knoll Cabernet Sauvignon block on October 2.

On the palate, the wine shows layers of deeply extracted flavors that only old vine hillside vineyards can render. Papa's Knoll Cabernet may be enjoyed anytime over the next 20 years. For those who seek youthful fresh cabernet fruit aromas and a more structured wine, drink it from 2020 through 2025. If you prefer the less fruity, more developed bottle bouquet aromas and a softer, more velvety wine on the palate, drink it from 2026-2039.

David Cronin
Winemaker

Appellation/Designation	Napa Valley/Estate Bottled Papa's Knoll
Varietal Composition	100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Brix at Harvest	25.8
New Oak	45% French
TA	0.62 g/100 ml
PH	3.78
Alcohol	14.7% vol
Production	520 cases
Suggested Retail	\$60.00

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BUEHLER VINEYARDS CABERNET SAUVIGNON NAPA VALLEY PAPA' S KNOLL 2017



Friday, February 14, 2020

Country United States
Region California
Vintage 2017

Score
91

Attractive, violet-like florals here. This has a very fresh array of blueberries and chocolate with a sleek, succulent core of fine, easygoing tannins and a rich, chocolate-infused, ripe-berry finish. Drink or hold. Synthetic cork.

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