

TOR

TOR Cabernet Sauvignon Cimarossa Vineyard, 2005

Vintage

When you examine all the statistical data, 2005 resembles the 1994 and 1991 vintages of recent history. They were all very, very long growing seasons with good crop levels, benign advantageous picking conditions, resulting in excellent dark wines. In a nutshell, if you were patient and dropped the right amount of fruit (up to 50% on some sites) to put your vines in balance, 2005 was a great year for most Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon.

The year started out with heavy rain, but a dry spell in March put bud break right on time, and June were wet months with up to 8" falling in many of the vineyards. July was warm, before we settled into a long cool growing season that lasted well into November for our Cabernet harvest. This extremely long hang time developed very mature flavors and dark colors, but at lower alcohol levels than 2001-2004. I was quoted in a futures tasting article for the *Wine Spectator* as saying the vintage was "Bordeaux-like." I'll add to that, "Bordeaux-like in a great year."

Vineyard

'Cimarossa' means 'red hill top' in Italian which aptly defines this very special hillside vineyard. The elevation is 2,100 feet and the soils are predominately red volcanic rock and dust. Not much can be cultivated on these steep hills besides the vines and some olive trees (which produce my favorite California oil). This is a special place: the clusters are small, the berries are tiny, but the flavors are BIG!

Winemaking

Our philosophy has been to let great vineyards produce great wines. We stay out of the way – our approach could be described as minimalist winemaking. The grapes are picked cold at the first light of morning, and crushed cold at the winery shortly thereafter. The 'must' is presoaked till its indigenous yeast begins metabolizing grape sugars and starts the winemaking process. We closely monitor flavors, color, and extracts during fermentation. We use all French oak coopers, predominately Taransaud Chateau for our Cabernet Sauvignon barrels. The 2005s were aged in these 20 gallon custom barrels with minimal racking for a total of 21 months.

The Wine

Very dark; deep ruby; beautiful. In my mind it is the best Cimarossa we have made to date. Like past vintages there is that wonderful minerality, wet graphite aroma. I have a hard time waiting to drink these wines, but patience will be rewarded – these wines are going to keep getting better. Again, I borrow Tanzer's descriptors from the *International Wine Cellar*, "Complex, pure, offers cassis, and fresh herbs. Large-scaled, plush and rich, with compelling ripeness to the flavors of blackcurrant, minerals and loamy earth. An impressively large-scaled wine that finishes with huge, broad, building tannins, and superb persistence."



Dominated by minerals, tannins, and earthiness is the dark ruby/purple-colored **2005 Cabernet Sauvignon Cimarossa Block**

10...exhibits sweet black raspberry and blackberry fruit along with crushed rock, white flower and spice characteristics.

Rating 93

Robert Parkers

"The Wine Advocate"

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