

VASO

2014 VASO by Dana Estates Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

VINTAGE

The 2014 vintage marks the third year of drought conditions in Napa after a winter rainfall which only brought half of the normal precipitation to the region. Nearly all the rains came in February and March, providing some relief after the bone-dry year of 2013 and recharging the soils just before the vines came out of their dormant period. Warm March weather caused the vines to emerge from dormancy early, with bud break in late March. The summer weather was mild with very few heat spikes above 100°F, and warm nights. The mild daytime temperatures allowed the grapes to retain tannin, while the warm nights resulted in lower than average acid levels. The early bud break and relatively temperate summer weather aligned for an early and bountiful harvest; our largest crop to date. Berry size was like that of 2012, yet we saw more berries per cluster. The fruit quality was excellent, bringing forth approachable wines with intensity, alluring aromatics, and classic fruit character.

HARVEST

After six years of transition towards dry farming, our vines were well prepared to weather the season, despite the parched soils. Our well-exposed, southwest facing sites on the Vaca Mountain range (Crystal Springs and Lotus Vineyards) were ready for harvest on September 10th and continued to trickle in over the next week. The first fruit to pass through the cellars doors from our Hershey Vineyard was clone 15 Merlot on September 17th. Never exceeding 100°F, the mild Howell Mountain climate allowed us to make measured picking decisions, the last of which was made October 14th. A small portion of vines on the well-drained foothills of our Rutherford Helms Vineyard were harvested on October 1st, while the majority was harvested over the course of two busy days starting October 11th.

METHOD

We used various fermentation vessels to harness the complexity of our sites. 52% of the blend was fermented in oak upright tanks, 28% in small barrel fermentations, 18% in concrete tanks, and 2% in open-top stainless-steel tanks. After undergoing native fermentation, the wines were drained and pressed directly to barrel where the native malolactic fermentation ran its course.

SENSORY

Aromatically generous, the 2014 VASO Cabernet Sauvignon exudes fragrances of plum, sage, and cassis with hints of tobacco box and warm spices. Flavors of Bing cherry entice the front palate as the hillside fruit expression takes over, fusing flavors of blackberry and dark chocolate across the supple yet structured palate. Ripe strawberry and crème brûlée linger on the finish. Lush and approachable now, this wine will continue to soften and develop over the next five to ten years. Enjoy with roasted meats, grilled vegetables, or perhaps a rich wild mushroom risotto.

STATISTICS

Appellation | Napa Valley

Blend | 96% Cabernet Sauvignon,
3% Petit Verdot, 1% Merlot

Élevage | 20 months in French oak

Coopers | Ermitage, Taransaud, Baron, Demptos

TA | 5.9 g/L

pH | 3.81 g/L

Bottling Date | June 28, 2016

