

2011 Forman Cabernet Sauvignon

I'll be the first to admit 2011 was not an easy vintage! We have had a lot of easy ones over the last 10 years, so really a tough one in a string of 10 easy ones – we shouldn't snivel. I have to go back to 1972 to remember one like it; a recollection that very few winemakers today can claim. Having lived through 1972 I had the tools to deal with 2011 and am glad of it. Rain during flowering and during harvest is a common Bordeaux phenomenon. This is exactly what we had for our harvest of 2011. Maybe that is why 2011, at least for me, so resembles a Bordeaux wine.

For 28 years, i.e. 28 vintages, many who have tasted my Cabernet have commented that it resembles the wines of Pauillac more than any other in the Napa Valley. One may or may not agree with this and I would have to admit the last 10 vintages or so, while still without a doubt are processing of the Pauillac spice, have tended also to have a slightly richer and more fruit forward character than some of the earlier years.

2010 Forman Cabernet Stats

Blend -75% Cabernet Sauvignon (100% Grande Roche)
 -3% Merlot (100% Grande Roche)
 -15% Cabernet Franc (100% Grande Roche)
 -7% Petite Verdot (100% Grande Roche)

Aging -22 months in 50% new, 50% 2-year old Bordeaux barrels

Fining -1 egg whites per barrel in November of 2012

Bottling -July 16 & 17, 2013
 -1,400 Cases 750ml
 -75 Cases 1.5 Liter
 -99 Bottles 3 Liter

Analysis at Bottling:

-Alcohol 14.25%
-Total Acidity 0.55g/100ml
-pH 3.75
-Volatile Acid 0.076g/100ml
-Glucose/Fructose <0.05g/100ml (dry)
-Malolactic Positive, carried out in barrels directly after harvest

Tasting Notes:

2011 is an anomaly in the midst of the last 10 vintages. It reminds me a lot of many of the early Forman wines. The color is nicely dark, similar to many Bordeaux reds, but not opaque which can be common in California. The aromatics are so reminiscent of Bordeaux that I easily can be fooled. A mildly herbal freshness mixed with leather, even smoked meat, is so not California. Plenty of berry and perfume aromas follow. This is a very intriguing wine and begs for a taste. Flavors are amazingly zesty with perfect acidity and really quite a lot of extract. This is extract that is not mixed with hot high alcohol. It's the kind that coats your mouth but also is refreshing and lingering in a flavorful way. 2011 is a fabulous food wine. It is what one looks for to compliment a rich and complex meal. Classic old-school Forman. I love this wine and plan on keeping a fair amount for myself even though it is in terribly short supply. I have fond memories of "old-school".

This is like the '83 – the wine that fooled all tasters at Draper Esquin in a First and Second Growth Bordeaux tasting, the wine that looked more like Palmer than Palmer which was one of the best of '83 and the one that Parker recognized early on as a Bordeaux made in California.