

■ THE SOMMELIER JOURNAL

AUGUST/SEPTEMBER 2024 • \$10.95

THE **SOMM** JOURNAL

A
LIFE
IN

RED

CELEBRATING
50 YEARS OF
RAYMOND
VINEYARDS

Boisset Collection founder
Jean-Charles Boisset at
Raymond Vineyards in
St. Helena, CA.



WINE: TWENTY ROWS 2022 RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, NAPA VALLEY

PRESENTER: DAVE MOORE, DIRECTOR OF
SALES, FIOR DI SOLE

Dave Moore, director of sales for Fior di Sole, was just as excited to showcase the Twenty Rows 2022 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon as the group was to learn what it was. In fact, he was so excited to taste through and discuss that he nearly forgot to solicit the crowd for guesses.

Fior di Sole, which produces Twenty Rows, is owned and operated in Napa Valley by Valentina Guolo and Stefano Migotto, who are resolute in their commitment to environmentally friendly practices such as organic bottling (their line is certified by California Certified Organic Farmers) and energy efficiency. They select their fruit from multiple small lots in the Oakville and Rutherford AVAs to produce a wine of typicity—a showcase for Napa Valley Cabernet with a small amount of either Petite Sirah or Petit Verdot, depending on the vintage, added for color and structure.

The 2022 vintage tested the mettle of winemakers across the region, which saw modest temperatures throughout the growing season until a dramatic triple-digit heat wave hit prior to harvest in early September; add this to the pressure they felt to replicate the small but lauded wines of 2021. But the team at Twenty Rows endured and succeeded. Aged in French and American barrels and pleasantly understated at 13.5% ABV, the presented wine offered classic Napa Cabernet style, redolent of baking spices; plush fruit; and lithe, crunchy tannins.

TASTING NOTES

- ◆ Straightforward red with oak tones, dark raspberry, and baking spices. Full-bodied with supple tannins and a lingering finish. —*Caleb Anderson*
- ◆ Ripe, with toasty oak and baking spices. Flavors of root beer and incense show depth. —*Jeffrey Bencus*



WINE: QUILT 2018 THE GRACE OF THE LAND RESERVE CABERNET SAUVIGNON, NAPA VALLEY

PRESENTER: TREVOR FRERKING,
SOUTHWEST REGION MANAGER, COPPER
CANE WINES & SPIRITS

The sommeliers were even more eager to witness the unveiling of the next wine, variously described as decadent and sensuous, with one panelist noting sotto voce that this was “a wine for lovers.” Trevor Frerking, Southwest region manager for Copper Cane Wines & Spirits, smiled as he removed the velvet to display the Quilt 2018 The Grace of the Land Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon.

While the wine’s gold wax seal and textured label evoke a sense of luxury, the devil is always in the details: As Frerking explained, the artwork on the label reflects a dedication to the Napa vineyards that inspired the wine’s creation, handpicked by fifth-generation winemaker Joe Wagner to showcase the best aspects of the region. “This shows a patchwork of Napa Valley,” said Frerking. “Grapes are sourced from three specific districts: Napa’s benchland, mountain, and valley areas.”

Coming from Atlas Peak, Calistoga, and St. Helena, the grapes for the wine are destemmed before undergoing a cold soak, followed by cold fermentation. Each lot of fruit spends two years aging in 100% new French oak before it’s finished in a second set of new French barrels for a couple of months. The result is full-bodied red wine at its most sumptuous.

TASTING NOTES

- ◆ A savory, herbal quality, with blackberry liqueur and bittersweet dark chocolate. Luxurious. —*Cristie Norman, lead sommelier, Wynn Las Vegas*
- ◆ Sensual aromas and flavors of violets and new leather. A kiss of residual sweetness rounds out the velvety finish. —*Kester Masias*