



FRATELLI PERATA WINERY
2001 CABERNET FRANC, ESTATE

We often use the phrase "Bordeaux varietals" in our tasting room. Bordeaux, France has made, and has been made, famous by the red grape varieties Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Merlot, and Petit Verdot.

The modern era of Paso Robles grape growing promoted planting of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Both do extremely well here, particularly when carefully cultivated toward premium wine production, not simply huge grape tonnage. With this in mind, we at Fratelli Perata began in 1997 blending Cabernet Franc with Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. It is found in the Merlot, Winemaker's Selection and in our Tre Sorelle.

The Cabernet Franc in these blends was used to add another layer of complexity. From the Cabernet Sauvignon are deep cherry, currant flavors with tannins for aging. From the Merlot are also cherry, mocha, and softer tannins, with the acidity for aging.

Now the Cabernet Franc adds softer tannins, lighter sense of acidity, deep color and the sense of terroir. There is an earthy smokiness that wraps around the cherry flavors. We have an earlier maturing variety with great color and flavors. Still the tonnage per acre is low, so the intensity we are known for shows well here.

The 2001 Cabernet Franc is a special vintage, worthy of bottling as a 100% varietal. It comes from our young vines of a new French clone that was highly touted. Now you can taste why.

The grapes were harvested in the early morning of Oct 9, 2001 at a Brix of 26.1 degrees, pH of 3.6. The grape clusters were sorted at the crusher for good color and perfect ripeness. It was fermented in 1-½ ton lots, with the cap punched down by hand 4 times per day for 12 days. It was pressed to only 1 bar of pressure in our stainless steel vat, and then pumped directly into new oak barrels, French and American. Racked 4 times during barrel aging, the wine was bottled unfiltered and unfiltered on February 22, 2003. This is a very limited production.

While the wine is more immediately accessible than the Cabernet Sauvignon, we project peak enjoyment at one to three years of bottle age. With its depth of flavor but relatively lower tannins, pair it with less rich cuts of meat such as top sirloin, but top the steak with grilled onions and mushrooms. Pair these with a great green salad and great friends and family.