



1996 Cabernet Sauvignon

The Paso Robles appellation offers a very fine environment for producing classic Cabernet Sauvignon. Soils are ideal, climate offers daytime temperatures with enough warmth to develop deep fruit. The nighttime temperatures range 40 to 50 degrees cooler than the daytime high temperatures, so the acid levels are preserved.

Fratelli Perata uses our estate grown grapes only. We have three hills of Cabernet, each contributing a different flavor component, each ripening at different times during the harvest season, due to differences in soil and exposure to the sun. Our harvest is therefore done over a period of weeks to obtain optimum sugar/acid ratios and best flavor.

In 1996, we again hand-harvested the Cabernet for processing in lots of 1 1/2 tons. Harvest dates ranged from September 21st to October 14th. Brix ranged from 23.8 to 24.1 degrees; pH of 3.48. Each lot was fermented separately for 11 to 13 days, the cap punched down by hand 4 times per day. Pressed at only 1.5 bar, the juice was placed in oak to finish fermentation. Tonnage for this vintage again ranged from 1 1/2 to 2 tons per acre, so the full intensity of the vine's energy is projected to the fruit.

At Fratelli Perata, we use 30 new oak on the Cabernet, 60 of the barrels being premium French oak. The balance of the barrels are up to three years old. The wine was blended with 14 Merlot prior to bottling, itself a full-flavored wine. An initial bottling was done on 8-15-98, a second, smaller bottling on 2-13-99. Bottles are finished with a two inch cork to facilitate aging.

To sum, intensity of the fruit flavors through small berry size, silky tannins typical of Paso Robles, use of top quality oak barrels for secondary fermentation and aging, relatively long barrel and bottle aging result in a complex, lingering wine, good mouth feel, classic flavors. These wines age and the patient wine-drinker is justly rewarded.