



ROBERT CRAIG WINERY

FALL | WINTER 2019





It has been a reflective couple of weeks in our Napa office and at the winery since Bob passed on Sunday the 15th of September from Parkinson's. Between fielding calls and texts and emails and social media comments (thank you!) and writing social media posts and an obituary for Bob and planning his memorial to come in November, it has been hard to even process the fact that he isn't here. Add to that our 29th harvest is in full swing while the power is out and the temperatures are eclipsing 100 degrees at the end of September, and that we are releasing our most highly prized 2016 wines to a predominantly new distributor network, thanks to consolidation in that realm, and it adds up to a very busy time for our little winery on Howell Mountain. I reached for the soap in my shower this morning and was surprised that the bar was so large before remembering I was back at home in Sausalito again and not at a hotel in Miami or Chicago or Los Angeles.

In a quiet moment before the Canadians descend for too much Craig Cabernet at Morimoto this evening, I happened to be looking at a wine publication's glowing review for a wine that I can barely tolerate (high RS, super-ripe, VA etc.) and one of Bob's favorite sayings came to mind: "Elton, the critics know a lot more than they understand." And not just wine critics, he would point out. Bob was the Yogi Berra of the Napa Valley when it came to the apt turn of phrase. Having a bland but well-presented dish at any pricy restaurant would elicit, "Someone in the kitchen forgot that it's supposed to taste good too." If a sizable purchase order was faxed (yes, faxed, I started at Craig in 2004) over at 10 AM, Bob would immediately declare, "Since we're already too late for a boozy lunch in New York, we had better get going to a martini now."

I'm not able to share some of his favorites here in the name of decorum, but Bob was never at a loss for one-liner wisdom. Through all the ups and downs and thick and thin here at our winery in the 15 years I've worked here, Bob's humor and optimism and generosity and passion and work ethic have produced the foundation of our business and our culture. The wine industry is a tough one, and the highly competitive and somewhat egocentric Napa Valley can be a hard place to make a living, but Bob celebrated a life in wine and grape growing every day. His outlook was, and continues to be, an inspiration.

When Bob welcomed me into the partnership in 2006, he tossed the CPA reviewed financials onto my desk and said, "Welcome to the partnership Elton. Here's your share of the losses." He then burst out laughing and declared it time to head to "Le Francais" (The Trancas Street Steakhouse) to see if they were running low on Tanqueray and olives. Our business has grown and blossomed thanks to the



talented folks who work, and have worked, here, and certainly somewhat from my guidance, but most of all from Bob's ever-present warmth to his coworkers, his friends, his customers, his family and even the people who he had just met. I hope you all had an opportunity to receive a hug from Bob at some point.

You can read about Bob's time in the business and how he arrived in the Napa Valley in his obituary in the Napa Valley Register. I wanted to share a few thoughts from his crew in Napa who loved working with him week in and week out through the years. There is no way to sum up what he meant to us on one page, but Bob and his full life being absent is like having a light out in the office. Whether it was Native American language preservation, the great Opera houses of the world, vintage Alfa Romeos, Arizona basketball, the key to marriage longevity, or vine row orientation; conversation over a glass of wine with Bob was never boring.

At Robert Craig Winery we continue forward and honor Bob and Lynn Craig's founding vision for producing small lot, single vineyard wines from shallow soils and high elevations within the Napa Valley. As we release the 2016 Estate Grown Cabernets from Mount Veeder and Howell Mountain, the best we have ever made in vintage and vineyard source, it's impossible not to reflect on the journey we have been on and where it began. We honor Bob's warmth of spirit and sense of humor in our company culture and our interactions with our customers and colleagues in our daily lives. With Mother Nature's increasingly unpredictable hand combining forces with all the other variables that make a life in wine a major roller coaster ride, Bob has taught us that we can only control our own response to adversity or success.

I can't quantify how much we miss our spiritual leader at the winery in a note, but I can say that we feel Bob's guidance every day by way of the example he set for us fifty-two weeks of the year at work. Enjoy these magnificent wines with loved ones and take a moment to crack one open and raise a glass to the west. Cheers Bob, we love and miss you, but you're still here with us.

Best,

Elton Slone
President/CEO/Partner



2016 HOWELL MOUNTAIN CABERNET SAUVIGNON WINERY ESTATE & CANDLESTICK RIDGE ESTATE VINEYARDS

"I love all of our mountain wines and celebrate each one for its unique display of terroir and microclimate. However, if the wines were my children, the one I would save first from the raging waters ahead of the rest is our Howell Mountain Estate Cabernet. Our Howell Mountain flagship is simply a stunning, irrefutable expression of this unique AVA, and what has made it so highly sought after."

— Elton Slone

The 2016 Howell Mountain is a blend of our structured Howell Mountain Winery Estate Vineyard and our Candlestick Ridge Estate Vineyard – featuring black, immense bramble berry fruit – just to the north. Both vineyards are situated at roughly 2300' of elevation along the summit of the mountain where the sparse, rocky soils are particularly shallow and nutrient poor. The resulting wine is multi-layered, deep and high toned with a youthful brashness still present at release.

We believe the 2016 will prove to be the greatest vintage since 1974 in the Napa Valley, but time will tell. Colgin, Harlan, Screaming Eagle have nothing on this wine in terms of farming cost, intensity and a long life ahead in the cellar. We recommend buying some one bottle brown bags to take all comers, from any price point, in the blind tasting arena.

BLEND: 82% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot **CASES PRODUCED:** 1843

"...Tightly wound and packed, the 2016 is full of energy. Raspberry jam, iron, dried flowers red flowers, mint and white pepper all help give the 2016 a decidedly high-toned profile, but it is the wine's energy and sense of drive that stand out most."

94 Points — Antonio Galloni, *Vinous.com*, 12/14/18

"Tasted as a barrel sample, the 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain is another pure, elegant, classic wine from this estate. Blueberries, tobacco leaf, forest floor and underbrush notes all emerge from medium to full-bodied beauty that has ripe tannin, notable freshness, and again, awesome purity of fruit."

93-95 Points — Jeb Dunnuck, *jebdunnuck.com*, 12/29/17



2016 MOUNT VEEDER CABERNET SAUVIGNON AMENTET ESTATE VINEYARD

"The perfect 2016 vintage proved to be an auspicious beginning to our relationship with our newly acquired Amentet Vineyard at 1700' on the Northwest end of the Mount Veeder AVA. While our new neighbors from Bordeaux invest in reinvigorating the Pym Rae Vineyard on Robin William's ranch that we enjoyed for 22 vintages next door, the excitement over our first release from our own property is tough to articulate."

— Elton Slone

This inaugural release from Amentet is deep in color with classic accents from the fossilized marine sediment that comprises the Mayacamas range on the west side of Napa Valley. The tannins are dense and round, and the mouthfeel luxurious. There is enough natural acid to prop up all the complexity in the dark wine and balance it well for cellaring. Antonio Galloni of *Vinous Media* raved about the first release, and the wine is showing even better a year on.

As a wine club member, you are one of the few to receive an allocation. Unfortunately, there will not be any wine available for reorders or up-orders this year. With our 2017 vintage falling victim to the wildfires, we won't release another Mount Veeder Cabernet until the 2018 vintage release in 2021. Sometimes you really can't get too much of a good thing.

BLEND: 86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Merlot **CASES PRODUCED:** 458

"A powerful, dense wine, the 2016 Cabernet Sauvignon Amentet Vineyard oozes Veeder character. Graphite, scorched earth, lavender, plum, blood orange and crème de cassis are all finely rendered in this superb, intensely mineral Cabernet Sauvignon. Powerful and yet refined, with tremendous energy, the 2016 is a winner from Robert Craig."

96 Points — Antonio Galloni, *Vinous.com*, 12/14/18



2016 HOWELL MOUNTAIN ZINFANDEL BLACK SEARS VINEYARD

Sandwiched between our Howell Mountain Winery Estate Vineyard and the Candlestick Ridge Estate Vineyard, the gorgeous Black Sears Vineyard also had a spectacular 2016 vintage. Both biodynamic and organic, the site is dry farmed and the vines pruned in the old world style with no trellising. Zinfandel thrives in the mountain's well-drained, rocky volcanic soils and moderate climate. Without doubt, the Black Sears Vineyard is the finest zinfandel vineyard in the world, and we are lucky to get a little fruit each year to make something special and rare.

The 2016 vintage is beautifully clean and focused with boysenberry and bramble berry on the nose and palate wrapped in subtle pepper spice. This beauty is balanced and elegantly structured through the finish.

BLEND: 73% Zinfandel, 23% Cabernet Franc CASES PRODUCED: 355



INAUGURAL RELEASE HOWELL MOUNTAIN PROPRIETARY RED "THE STICK" CANDLESTICK RIDGE VINEYARD

At Robert Craig Winery our primary mission is to produce long-lived wines that express the rare, high elevation terroirs that give them their singular character. We acquired the Candlestick Ridge Estate Vineyard from Duckhorn in 2015, and we felt we needed a year with it to figure out what it would give us. It shares the 2300' elevation mark with our Winery Estate vineyard on the summit ridge of Howell Mountain, but the eastern orientation and the tongue that peers into Pope Valley allows for slightly warmer temperatures. The pure white volcanic tufa soils are also a change from the basalt series soils at our winery location.

As a result, the Bordeaux-inspired wines from this vineyard are deep black, tannic and intense. The brute structure of Candlestick Ridge required the addition of some Merlot and Malbec to help round the wine out and give it depth and mouthfeel. We have long called the vineyard "The Stick" around the office for short, but it makes a perfect proprietary name for this profound wine. In a world of carrots and sticks, The Stick represents the discipline. Enjoy this rare wine of which we produced fewer than 500 cases. 2016 is a classic vintage, and this wine will cellar extremely well.

TASTING NOTES

The color is opaque, black and dense, while the palette offers explosive, dark wild berry fruit along with classic Howell Mountain mineral and crushed rock. If enjoying this wine young, which it is balanced enough to do, we recommend an hour decant to help the wine unlock.

"This carries a very toasty and spicy edge that makes for a modern impression on the nose with brightly ripe blue fruit as the central theme. The palate has a very polished, fresh and energetic feel with ripe blackberry and blueberry flavors holding long and fresh. ..."

94 Points — Jeb Dunnuck, jebdunnuck.com, 12/29/17

"... dense, powerful and super-concentrated. ... The blackberry jam, bittersweet chocolate, sweet oak and spice flavors offer tons of richness and pure power, ..."

94 Points — Antonio Galloni, vinous.com, 12/14/18



MEET THE NEWEST CRAIG CREW MEMBER

It is our pleasure and honor to introduce you to the latest addition to our team here at Robert Craig Winery. Jami Castro has joined us as the Director of Direct to Consumer Sales and Hospitality. In her new capacity, Jami will also be heading up our Cabernet Club, so she will be the primary contact for our favorite Craigers.

Jami is a longtime resident of the Napa Valley and a major fan of the great wines of the world. She has been building relationships while sipping her way through the local wine industry for the last 20 years, and she is looking forward to meeting and connecting with our wide array of Craig customers. Jami is a customer service samurai, so feel free to reach out with any club questions or just to introduce yourself. Please say hello to Jami (and the rest of us!) when you get to the Tasting Salon in the coming months.



NEW CRAIG CREW CLUB MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS

With the Fall 2019 release, we are excited to introduce NEW SHIPPING BENEFITS to our valued members, along with new names for our membership levels:

	CRAIG SUMMIT SOCIETY (12-bottle)	CRAIG PREMIER CREW (6 bottle)	CRAIG VILLAGE (3-bottle & A La Mode)
Preferred Pricing	20%	15%	10%
Club Ground Shipping	Complimentary	Half-Off	Half-Off
Two-Week "Pre-Release" Shipping Benefit	Complimentary	Half-Off	Half-Off

Craig For the Holidays



Holiday collections coming soon for all your gift giving needs. Let us help you manage your holiday list; everyone from your favorite wine connoisseurs to your corporate clients. The Craig Crew can help!



UPCOMING EVENTS

- October 14** **FALL CLUB RELEASE**

- November 2** **HOWELL MOUNTAIN HARVEST CELEBRATION**
Copia, Napa

- November 8** **BOB CRAIG REMEMBRANCE**
Veteran's Home, Lincoln Theater, Yountville, California

- December 7** **HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE**
Tasting Salon, Downtown Napa

- January 26** **LMU WINE CLASSIC**
Los Angeles, California

ROBERT CRAIG WINE LIST

FALL RELEASES

2016 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$110
2016 Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon	\$100
2016 "The Stick" Howell Mountain Proprietary Red	\$150
2016 Howell Mountain Zinfandel	\$60

CURRENT RELEASES

2016 Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay	\$55
2016 Howell Mountain Merlot	\$90
2016 Côte de Craig	\$90
2016 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	\$70
2016 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$100
2016 Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$120
2014 Robert's Block Cabernet Sauvignon	\$295

7 YEAR RE-RELEASE — Extremely Limited Quantities

2012 Durell Vineyard Chardonnay	\$60
2012 Howell Mountain Zinfandel	\$70
2012 Affinity Cabernet Sauvignon	\$80
2012 Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon	\$105
2012 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$105
2012 Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$130
2012 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$120

LARGE FORMAT AVAILABILITY

2016 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5L \$165/ 3.0L \$395
2016 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5L \$245/ 3.0L \$485
2016 Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5L \$225/ 3.0L \$460
2016 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5L \$225/ 3.0L \$460
2016 Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5L \$265/ 3.0L \$495

MEMBERS BENEFITS | www.robertcraigwine.com

- Craig Summit Society** (formerly 12-Bottle) 20% off + Complimentary Shipping on Reorders
- Craig Premier Crew** (formerly 6-Bottle) 15% off + Half-Off Ground Shipping on Reorders
- Craig Village** (formerly 3-Bottle & A La Mode) 10% off + Half-Off Ground Shipping on Reorders

HOW TO ORDER

Visit our online wine shop at robertcraigwine.com

Contact us by phone at 707.252.2250 ext. 1 or 2

Email: sales@robertcraigwine.com

VISIT OUR DOWNTOWN NAPA TASTING SALON

Tastings available by appointment at Bar Craig
Mon-Sat 10am – 4pm
Sun 11am – 4pm

Call 707.252.2250 ext. 1 or email info@robertcraigwine.com

To inquire about membership, or upgrade your membership level, contact us directly 707.252.2250 x 2

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