



ROBERT CRAIG WINERY

FALL | WINTER 2020





## A note from Elton...



Dear Craiger,

Despite living in what seems to be some sort of alternative universe since February, summer has flown by quicker than I can ever remember. In the middle of a pandemic, social upheaval, political vitriol and challenges to our business that I could never have imagined, the vines continue to grow, the tiny grapes on our mountain vineyards are slowly changing color, the interns are arriving for harvest, and Jason, Keith and Connor are putting the next vintage to bed after many tastings and deliberations over the final blends. Fall has arrived for those of us working in wine.

Through everything this difficult year, the heart of Mother Nature continues to beat out a soothing rhythm that is as old as time. Bud break, flower, fruit set, thinning, veraison, sampling, and harvest all move forward as they have in California's vineyards for the last 200 years or more. This sameness is a tonic for me in the middle of so much change. In March, April, and May of last year we welcomed more than 1,000 customers and friends to experience our wines on Howell Mountain and in our Salon; in 2020 during those same months we greeted just 34 intrepid souls. And, with more than 60% of our annual production being sold through restaurants, most of which do not even exist anymore, it has been a hard pivot for our business and our culture at Craig. This brings me to the grateful part.

In the face of all these challenges, our customers (this means you) have stepped up and kept the wine flowing and the wheels turning at Robert Craig Winery. Our business has weathered the worst of the storm though the seas remain choppy. We have survived this through the loyalty of our customers and also because we consistently produce some of the best wines in the Napa Valley while keeping our prices reasonable.

The 2017 Howell Mountain Cabernet is a classic, towering, structured, and layered offering that, like the 2015 version, will take a bit of cellar time to reveal



itself fully. For the Mount Veeder release, we travel back to the precious 2014 Vintage from the Pym Rae vineyard to fulfill our Cabernet Club commitment as the 2017 wine was lost to the wildfires of that harvest season. These two wines perfectly exemplify our commitment to the focused expression of mountain vineyard sites, and why savvy collectors continue to seek us out.

Recently, to celebrate the life of my friend, business partner and our winery founder, Michael Nugent, who passed from a sudden illness in early August, I chose to open a special bottle from the cellar. I needed a worthy companion that evening to wish Michael well on his journey while digesting his absence. Shelly and I sat outside on our deck in Sausalito and watched the hummingbirds whirr to and fro from the feeder while we had a glass of Ric Forman's stunning 2006 Cabernet that hails from Howell Mountain, though just below the AVA line. Ric's wine was the perfect accompaniment to quiet contemplation of a life well lived and a summer evening in the perfumed garden that is Sausalito. It is a shame that there are so few of these wines that are available to us from the Napa Valley anymore. The highest quality for a reasonable price. I can think of many "cult" Cabernets that command three times (or more) the price of Forman that I would pass by at the tasting table for a sip of Ric's produce. I feel the same way about our wines.

Robert Craig Winery wines remain faithful to this same ideal, and that is why, and how, we will continue on. There has never been a better time to be a fine wine consumer on so many fronts. Distributors, including ours, are liquidating inventory to retailers in order to keep cash flowing, and there are so many good deals on wine that I find my own cellar swelling when it probably should not be. Grape sales have come to a screeching halt thanks to COVID-19, so we bottled up some truly world class mountain wine and put it out for \$45 per bottle rather than \$60 as intended. Depending on what margin the distributor and retailer are willing to work on, the prices on wines, including Craig, can be extremely



attractive. I simply cannot completely control what happens with our wines when they leave our warehouse, and I cannot refuse to fill distributor orders and remain in business. This is yet another reason that we appreciate your support all the more as we navigate through this. I shop at our local market, at our local wine shop and at my local bike shop despite being able to find better prices at the corporate competition. More than ever, it's important to support our communities, and we feel your support for us here on Howell Mountain. Of course, we will match any advertised price, but they can't match our spirit.

As summer gives way to fall here in 2020, I find myself working in a business that I love, rooted in the turn of the earth on its axis through the seasons. Shelly and Toonces and I are all safe and well despite the fiscal challenges and anxiety that COVID-19 has brought with it. Loved ones have departed in a wave this year, made only stranger by the lack of closure and proximity that the virus requires. Through all of this we have enjoyed your support and advocacy both personally and at our mountain winery. I am thrilled to send you these beautiful wines produced from singular vineyard sites in remote places. I hope we get the chance to share more wine together through our upcoming virtual webinars and, soon enough, in person. I apologize for the long letter, but there is always a good deal to share. Most of all, on behalf of Shelly and me and our gang at Craig I want to say thank you for coming on this journey with us. You are our community, and your support is appreciated more than I can articulate. I'm wishing you and your families safe passage through the Corona minefield and a return to normalcy soon. We will all be a little wiser on the other side of this.

Love and peace,

Elton Slone  
President/CEO/Partner



## 2017 Howell Mountain Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

The 2017 Howell Mountain Cabernet will unfold slowly over the coming years while keeping the tension and energy as a framework for the gorgeous fruit that is just beginning to emerge at release time. Like the 2015 vintage, 2017 was defined by tiny berry size on Howell Mountain resulting in plentiful tannin from the high skin-to-juice ratio. The tannins close the wine a touch in the early stages, but the structure is there for the long haul.

Classic Howell Mountain features flow from the glass: crushed rock and warm black stones, graphite, cassis, thorny underbrush, and dark mountain flowers are all present in this iconic wine. 2017 will be best enjoyed with a long decant—two hours plus—if it is to be consumed while young. In three years, to the next twenty-five, this old-world structured gem will continue to grow in intensity and complexity. As always, the Howell Mountain bottling defines us as a producer. It is, without qualifier, one of the Napa Valley's finest red wines each year.

**BLEND:** 80% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Merlot, 2% Petit Verdot

**CASES PRODUCED:** 1320



## 2014 Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon Pym Rae Vineyard

In farming, nothing is certain. We've experienced drought, pest pressures, vine virus, windstorms and hungry wild turkeys, boars and bears (bears!). All these challenges pale in comparison to the magnitude of the wildfires in 2017. On the day that our pick was called on our Amentet vineyard on Mount Veeder in 2017, a mandatory evacuation was called by the county, and our fruit rode out the fire storm while still on the vines. Though the vineyard was spared, we lost the 2017 crop along with a million dollars in much needed revenue that insurance would not cover. What to do in 2020 when we are due to release this highly allocated wine to our club? Dig deep and offer our precious library up to our best customers.

The 2014 vintage was our 21st of 22 consecutive vintages from Robin Williams' beautiful Pym Rae vineyard along the northern border of the Mount Veeder AVA at 1700' of elevation. Pete Richmond, who many of you met in our July webinar, was farming the vineyard from 2013 through 2015, so the level of care and eye to detail was at the very highest level. The Robert Craig Winery 2014 Mount Veeder won't set you back \$350 per bottle like the current produce from Pym Rae, but it is no less a bottle and received nearly identical marks from the press. Our 2014 Veeder Cabernet is just emerging from its shell and taking flight. You may enjoy it now or save it to toast a special occasion well down the road. It is our way of saying thank you for your participation with us in our mountain Cabernet journey.

**BLEND:** 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 11% Merlot, 1% Malbec

**CASES PRODUCED:** 2287



## 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.

With our 2017 vintage falling victim to the wildfires, we will not release another Mount Veeder Cabernet until the 2018 vintage release in 2021. As a newer wine club member, you are one of the few to receive an allocation of the 2016 which was released last year. We held a little back from this tiny production to share with our newer members... as a year without Veeder would be heartbreaking!

**BLEND:** 86% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Merlot

**CASES PRODUCED:** 458



## 2017 Howell Mountain Zinfandel Black Sears Vineyard

There are Zinfandels and there are Zinfandels. From Paul Draper's classics at Ridge of Geyserville and Lytton Springs, to Biale's Monte Rosso, to our neighbor Larry Turley's Hayne Vineyard (valley floor) and Rattlesnake and Dragon (next door to us on Howell), I'm always amazed at the varied expressions of this exuberant variety.

Nowhere does Zinfandel display itself in a more dramatic fashion than on our neighboring Black Sears Vineyard farmed organically, biodynamically, and without irrigation by Pete Richmond who also farms our Howell Mountain properties. Every year we get a bit less of this fruit from Ashley Sears Jambois and her husband Chris Jambois, who operate the Black Sears Family Vineyards, due to a significant conversion to Cabernet from Zinfandel in their vineyard.

The 2017 is a perfect example of why this property is so sought after. The wine is luscious and deep with ground white pepper and Howell Mountain floral perfume all wrapped inside that scaffolding of tannin and acidity that allow these wines to cellar so well. We only have a little, and I suggest putting a six pack away before it's all spoken for.

**BLEND:** 100% Zinfandel  
**CASES PRODUCED:** 295



## 2015 Robert's Block

This fall we are excited to announce the release of our 2015 vintage Robert's Block Cabernet Sauvignon from Block 2 at the top of our Winery Estate Vineyard on Howell Mountain. Each year we produce only one or two barrels depending on the crop size from the property. 2015 was a one-barrel vintage due to extremely small yields, less than one ton per acre, on this block that sits perched on a shelf of pure, white, volcanic tufa soil. Block 2 produces fruit that is deep black, tannic and complex while silken in texture. The cost to farm this portion of the winery vineyard is astronomical due to the tiny production and hand work required. It adds so much to our Howell Mountain Estate offering, that we can only cull out one barrel, from twenty, to produce this extraordinary wine.

We release Robert's Block Cabernet when we feel it is ready to be enjoyed without the penalty of it being "closed", and the 2015 has finally arrived there, though it can be cellared for decades to come. Our Cabernet Club gets the first offering on Robert's Block, and this is your chance to attain one of the most rare bottles produced in all of Napa.

**BLEND:** 100% Cabernet Sauvignon  
**CASES PRODUCED:** 25



## Three Ways to Join Us for a Virtual Tasting

We miss you! If you are not quite ready or able to plan a visit to the Napa Valley, let the Napa Valley come to you.

### Register for one of Elton's Interactive Virtual Tasting Webinars

Missing some of those social interactions and outlets? Connect with Elton and other Cabernet loving friends each month as he hosts a themed Virtual Tasting Webinar. If you would like to sip alongside Elton and his special guest host, purchase the specially selected Wine Tasting Set ahead and join in the fun! Raise a glass, share in the stories, learn something new and feel the camaraderie.

### Schedule a Private Interactive Virtual Tasting for your Friends or Family

Looking for a more personal Virtual Tasting experience? Do you have a special occasion coming up and are looking for a creative way to celebrate? We would love to schedule a private Virtual Tasting for you and your family or friends. Choose the Tasting Set that most appeals to you and we will coordinate a Zoom Tasting experience for you and your guests hosted by one of our knowledgeable Craig crew members!

### Schedule a Private Interactive Virtual Tasting for your Corporate Group

Are you looking for ways to stay connected to clients and business partners? Does your team deserve a reward for a job well done? Are you trying to develop a team building activity with everyone working remotely? Let us coordinate a Virtual Tasting experience co-hosted by you. We will work with you to choose the wines that fit your budget and send ahead to each of your recipients. Sharing a glass, even virtually, brings everyone together.

Give us a call 707-252-2250, visit the Events or Visit section of our Website or email us at [info@robertcraigwine.com](mailto:info@robertcraigwine.com) for more information on a Virtual Tasting experience.



## Our Tasting Salon & Howell Mountain Winery are Open to Visitors

The health and safety of our Guests and employees is of utmost concern to us at Robert Craig. We have implemented all the suggested safety protocols to make your visit worry-free.

### Our commitment to ourselves and to you:

- Until indoor experiences are allowable, all Guest Experiences will be hosted outside on our shaded Patios at both our Salon and the Winery.
- Our Patio has been arranged to provide 6 feet of distance between Guests to maintain proper physical distancing.
- We will limit reservations to no more than 6 people in a party and everyone should be from the same household.
- We will also limit reservations to no more than two Guest parties at a time, in order to provide appropriate distancing.
- We are offering set times for visits to our Tasting Salon, in order to properly sanitize before and after each guest visit.
- We ask that all Guests arrive wearing a face mask. Once your tasting begins, you will be able to remove it.
- Your host will wear a face mask and will properly sanitize all surfaces before and after each Guest visit.
- We are offering contact-free payment options and asking for all Guest information at the time of booking.
- We will no longer require the usual 24 hours of advance notice for cancellation and will offer a full refund of Tasting Fees if folks need to cancel a reservation due to anyone in their party experiencing a fever, cough, sore throat, or any other COVID-19 related symptoms.

We look forward to raising a glass with you!



## Upcoming Events

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|-----------------------|---|
| <b>September 11</b>   | Interactive Tasting Webinar<br>With Elton & Special Guest TBD |
| <b>October 9</b>      | Interactive Tasting Webinar<br>With Elton & Special Guest TBD |
| <b>November 13</b>    | Interactive Tasting Webinar<br>With Elton & Special Guest TBD |
| <b>December 4 / 5</b> | Holiday Open House<br>Virtual or In-person TBD                |

**If you have missed any of our previous Webinars, they are all available to view on YouTube.**

- The Fabulous 15's
- Small Lots, Big Flavors
- It's a Matter of Time
- It's All About Candlestick
- Mount Veeder Masterclass
- Deep Roots in the Napa Valley



## Our 7 Year Library Release

One of the benefits of belonging to our Cabernet Club is access to our Library Selection wines that have shipped to our temperature-controlled warehouse immediately following bottling and have not moved ever since. They are in pristine condition, and we offer them for sale both seven years, and ten years, after vintage date with our best customers getting the first opportunity to buy them.

Our seven-year library release is the milestone 2013 vintage for us at Robert Craig Winery. Our farming went from “high quality in-house farming” to the expertise of one of Napa’s best farming companies, at great expense, and the resulting wines leaped forward in quality. In 2013, Affinity Cabernet evolved from 50% purchased fruit to 100% estate grown. 2013 also saw a label update for us to give our name a less crowded, more classic space on the front label while a deep emboss of the summit ridge of our Howell Mountain home appeared along the top.

The press fawned on the vintage in general, and on Robert Craig Winery wines in particular, and there are precious few to allocate. This is your opportunity to access some truly stunning Napa Valley wines that have been perfectly cellared for years. 2013 was not just great for us in Cabernet Sauvignon as the Chardonnay, Zinfandel and Merlot are also thrilling, vibrant and complex. Don't miss your opportunity with the 2013's.

### Cabernet Club Member Benefits: All Wine Clubs are Completely Customizable

	Craig Summit Society (4 cases per year)	Craig Premier Crew (2 cases per year)	Craig Village (1 case per year)
Preferred Pricing	20%	15%	10%
Club Ground Shipping	Complimentary	Half-Off	Half-Off



## Robert Craig Wine List

### FALL RELEASES

2017 Howell Mountain Black Sears Vineyard Zinfandel	\$65
2017 Howell Mountain Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	\$110
2017 Côte de Craig Howell Mountain Estate	\$90
2015 Howell Mountain Estate Robert's Block Cabernet Sauvignon	\$295

### CURRENT RELEASES

2017 Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay	\$55
2017 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	\$70
2017 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$100
2017 Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$120
2017 Howell Mountain Estate Merlot	\$90
2016 "The Stick" Howell Mountain Estate Candlestick Ridge Vineyard	\$150

### 7 YEAR RE-RELEASE

2013 Howell Mountain Zinfandel Black Sears Vineyard	\$74
2013 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	\$86
2013 Howell Mountain Estate Merlot	\$110
2013 Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon	\$123
2013 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$123
2013 Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$147
2013 Howell Mountain Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	\$135

### 2013 HOWELL MOUNTAIN ESTATE ROBERT'S BLOCK CABERNET SAUVIGNON \$316

2017 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5L \$165/ 3.0L \$395
2017 Howell Mountain Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5L \$245/ 3.0L \$485
2016 Mount Veeder Estate Cabernet Sauvignon Amentet Vineyard	1.5L \$225/ 3.0L \$460
2017 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5L \$225/ 3.0L \$460
2017 Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	1.5L \$265/ 3.0L \$495

### How To Order

Visit our online wine shop at [robertcraigwine.com](http://robertcraigwine.com)  
 Contact us by phone at 707.252.2250 | Email: [sales@robertcraigwine.com](mailto:sales@robertcraigwine.com)  
 To inquire about membership, or upgrade your membership level,  
 contact us directly 707.252.2250

### Visit Our Downtown Napa Tasting Salon

Tastings available by appointment at our Downtown Napa Tasting Salon & Patio  
 Mon-Sat 10am - 4pm; Sun 11am - 4pm  
 Call 707.252.2250 or Email: [info@robertcraigwine.com](mailto:info@robertcraigwine.com)



ROBERT CRAIG WINERY  
625 Imperial Way, Suite One  
Napa, California 94559

[robertcraigwinery.com](http://robertcraigwinery.com)  
f t i @robertcraigwinery

