



ROBERT CRAIG WINERY

FALL | WINTER 2018





A note from Elton...



Dear Craiger,

It is with great anticipation that we look forward to sending our fall mountain Cabernet Sauvignon shipment to our best and brightest this year. The 2015 vintage wines are all precious to us since the yields were down so dramatically — from 20% to 60% — due to inclement weather at fruit set and flowering. It's what I call a "Ramen Noodle" year financially at Craig.

Whereas 2014 was characterized by a completely unremarkable growing season with strong yield and high quality (a "caviar" year, see?), 2015 was a vintage for the record books with small, loose clusters of tiny berries clinging to the vines at the end. Stephen used extended skin contact and higher fermentation temperatures to maximize extraction of color and flavor from the thick-skinned fruit that was reticent to let go without a whip and a chair. The 2015 wines are uniformly dark, dense and structured as a result. The 2014s extended their hands in greeting upon release, whereas the 2015s extended a closed fist. Fortunately, the 2015 wines are through their awkward teenage stage and have knit together over the last six months.

Tasting the wines frequently (ahem!) over the last weeks and months has brought the quality of this tiny vintage into full focus. Youth will be served.

To me, this is the joy of producing small-lot, single vineyard wines. At Robert Craig Winery there will always be a sense of place in the wines, and there will also exist a sense of vintage. The wines will show their true nature without interference at Craig.

The 2015 Howell Mountain Cabernet is displaying an amplified class and power from the first addition of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot from our new Candlestick Ridge Estate Vineyard. It is a game changer for sure. The 2015 Spring Mountain District Cabernet is simply stunning. Deep, black, layered



and supple, this is, in my mind, our best to date as we are finally getting the center rows from Joan Crowley's beautiful vineyard. And rounding out our Fall Releases, the 2015 bottling of Zinfandel from Black Sears Vineyard next door is drinking beautifully, with juicy notes of wild blackberry and cherry cola along with the classic white pepper and spice.

Whether it is our Chardonnay, Zinfandel, Cabernet, Syrah or Merlot; in 2015, we produced monumental wines. It is your time to enjoy them.

We had our annual company harvest gathering last week, on a perfect summer evening, at the vineyard shed in the Affinity Vineyard on the slopes of Mount George. We were lucky enough to have Bob and Lynn come down the hill to join us, with their son Bryan and his new bride Camille in tow. We all enjoyed wine and carnitas and soul food with the gang that continues on in the company they founded almost 30 years ago. We toasted the new interns, opened many old bottles, and enjoyed Carlos Mendez's ample culinary skills. I'm so blessed to work with this group of people, producing these wines, and living this time in this place. It struck me how real all of the conversation was around the tables. Not a lot of small talk, but people taking time to check in on each other. From the real deal crew at our little joint, we are pleased and honored to send you the wines that are an expression of our outlook this year. Thank you for your continued support.

Love and Peace and Cabernet,

Elton Slone
President/CEO/Partner



2015 HOWELL MOUNTAIN CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Our Howell Mountain release continues to be sourced primarily from our nine-acre Winery Estate Vineyard, but this is the first vintage that includes some fruit – both Cabernet and Merlot – from our new Candlestick Ridge Estate Vineyard.

The nine-acre Winery Estate Vineyard continues to demand constant attention – with huge variation in soils and microclimates. This site always has tiny yields, and 2015 was even scarcer than usual, with early budbreak followed by cooler temperatures leading to a smaller crop.

Just down the road, Candlestick Ridge is the northernmost vineyard in the Howell Mountain AVA and is slightly warmer than the summit ridge where the Winery Estate Vineyard lies. Candlestick is influenced by warm air from Pope Valley to the east and – at its slightly lower elevation – it is protected from the constant wind that hits the ridge line.

The Candlestick fruit added darker fruit aromatics and a fleshy, more opulent mid-palate. This blends beautifully with the wild, bramble berry character of the Winery Estate fruit, really opening up the complexity, depth and flavor of this wine. You'll notice the fruit notes enter the arena in a more pronounced way with the 2015, offering a generous dose of luxury on the palate.

BLEND: 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Petit Verdot, 4% Malbec, 1% Merlot

CASES PRODUCED: 1275

94 POINTS

“The 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Howell Mountain is a blend of 88% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Petit Verdot, 4% Malbec and a splash of Merlot that spent 18 months in 80% new French oak. It has a darker, mineral-driven style in its blue fruits, smoked earth, charcoal, and graphite aromatics. These give way to a full-bodied, beautifully concentrated, fresh, lively 2015 that’s going to benefit from 3-4 years of bottle age and keep for 15+.”

4 — Jeb Dunnuck, jebdunnuck.com, 12/29/17



2015 SPRING MOUNTAIN CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Perched at 2000' along the summit of Spring Mountain, Joan Crowley's beautiful vineyard has produced special wines since our first release in 2005. Starting with the 2014 vintage, we were able to add additional fruit from the center rows in the best section of the vineyard. While not entirely dry farmed, with some irrigation used when necessary, the water deficit and farming methods reduce vigor and crop yield which results in small, flavor-packed berries. 2015 was a brilliant year in this block, displaying the mountain's characteristic blue notes — blueberry, boysenberry and exotic plum fruits — that are so distinctive to Cabernet grown on its slopes.

This Cabernet is simply stunning. Ripe fruit aromas of blueberry, huckleberry and currant meet hints of mocha, baking spice and black licorice. On the juicy, complex palate, blue and black fruits take center stage, followed by a firm, full mid-palate. This inky, vibrant wine offers finesse, restraint and intensity, all wrapped into one.

BLEND: 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Cabernet Franc, 7% Petit Verdot

CASES PRODUCED: 833

94+ POINTS

“A blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 18% Cabernet Franc and the rest Petit Verdot, the 2015 Cabernet Sauvignon Spring Mountain offers a classic Mountain fruit profile with its complex aromatics and fresh, focused, chiseled and structured style on the palate. Mulberries, incense, exotic flowers, and spice all leap from the glass of this inky colored Cabernet Sauvignon, and it's medium to full-bodied, structured and vibrant on the palate. Brought up in 80% new French oak, it has loads of potential but needs 2-4 years of bottle age.”

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



2015 HOWELL MOUNTAIN ZINFANDEL BLACK SEARS VINEYARD

Black Sears Vineyard has “King of the Mountain” bragging rights on Howell Mountain. At 2400', it's officially the highest vineyard in the AVA. We consider it a “kissing cousin” of sorts, sandwiched between our Winery Estate Vineyard and Candlestick Ridge Estate Vineyard. Both biodynamic and organic, the site is dry-farmed and the vines are pruned in the old world style with no trellising. Zinfandel thrives in the mountain's well-drained, rocky volcanic soils and moderate climate.

The 2015 Black Sears Vineyard Zinfandel is classically structured, with ample weight, offering a nice balance between flavor, alcohol, pH and tannin — melding the power of mountain Zinfandel fruit with a light winemaking touch in the cellar. A powerful variation on a Howell Mountain, old vine theme, the wine is bursting with warm red stones, wild blackberry and raspberry, and cherry cola, with a classic dash of ground white pepper on the long finish, where balanced acidity provides structure and length.

BLEND: 83% Zinfandel, 12% Petit Sirah, 5% Petite Verdot
CASES PRODUCED: 458



ANNUAL HARVEST PARTY | SEPTEMBER 22 | Robert Craig Winery, Howell Mountain, Napa



Photos courtesy of Benny Villarreal

UPCOMING EVENTS

JOIN US | HOLIDAY OPEN HOUSE AT THE CRAIG | FRIDAY, DECEMBER 8

Holiday Open House at the Craig Tasting Salon, Downtown Napa
Kick off the holiday season in style at our annual Holiday Open House.



CRAIG FOR THE HOLIDAYS

There are many options to choose from, whether it's for an office party, corporate giving, or for that special someone on your list.

Choose a Mountain Flight, a three-year vertical of Affinity, or perhaps the very limited, exclusive Robert's Block. From Magnums to three-liter bottles, to trio sets, The Craig has everything to suit each person on your holiday gift giving list!

THE PERFECT GIFT WOOD BOX | \$105 OR MAGNUM WOOD BOX | \$205

1 bottle 2015 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

CRAIG TRIO WOOD BOX | \$220

2015 Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay | 2015 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon
2015 Howell Mountain Zinfandel

AFFINITY VERTICAL WOOD BOX | \$250

2013 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon | 2014 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon
2015 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

CRAIG ESTATE WOOD BOX | \$275

Two bottles 2015 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon
One bottle 2015 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon

MOUNTAIN GOLD TRIO WOOD BOX | \$315

2015 Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon | 2015 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon
2015 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon

LIBRARY MOUNTAIN CABS WOOD BOX | \$360

2011 Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon | 2011 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon
2011 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon

Look for these fantastic wine gifts online or call us directly to order by phone. (707) 252-2250 x1 or x2



ROBERT CRAIG WINE LIST

SPRING RELEASES

2015 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$95
2015 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$90
2015 Howell Mountain Zinfandel	\$60

CURRENT RELEASES

2015 Gap's Crown Vineyard Chardonnay	\$50
2015 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	\$70
2015 Mount Veeder Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	\$90
2015 Howell Mountain Merlot	\$90
2015 Côte de Craig	\$90 (last 8 cases)
2016 Côte de Craig	\$90 (NOVEMBER RELEASE)

375ML BOTTLES

2014 Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon	\$26 (LAST VINTAGE)
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1.5 LITER MAGNUMS

	Ask about older vintages
2015 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	\$165
2015 Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon	\$205
2015 Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$205
2015 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$205
2015 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$215

3 LITERS

	Very Limited
2015 Affinity Estate Cabernet Sauvignon	\$395
2015 Mount Veeder Cabernet Sauvignon	\$450
2015 Diamond Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$450
2015 Spring Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$450
2015 Howell Mountain Cabernet Sauvignon	\$465

MEMBERS ONLY DISCOUNTS

12-Bottle Members	20%
6-Bottle Members	15%
3-Bottle & A La Mode Members	10%

HOW TO ORDER

Visit our online wine shop at robertcraigwine.com

Contact us by phone at 707.252.2250 ext. 1 or 2

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 lori@robertcraigwine.com

Tasting Fee \$25 pp
Complimentary for Cabernet Club members.

To inquire about membership, or upgrade your membership level, contact us directly 707.252.2250 x 2 or email rachel@robertcraigwine.com.



WINERY EXCLUSIVE LIMITED RELEASES

To acquire, contact us directly at (707) 252-2250 x1 or x2 or log in to the CLUB ONLY section on our online wine shop at robertcraigwinery.com.

2016 CÔTE DE CRAIG SYRAH/GRENACHE

A 60/40 blend of Syrah and Grenache, this second vintage of Côte de Craig is sourced from our new Candlestick Ridge Estate Vineyard. As our homage to the tremendous Rhône Valley Côte Rotie wines from the South of France, this wine is powerful, deep, perfumed and structured. We're holding on to the 2016 release a bit longer than the previous vintage, to give it additional time in bottle here in our cellar. Patience will be rewarded ... just in time for the holidays!

Just 95 cases made

2016 DIAMOND MOUNTAIN CABERNET SAUVIGNON

January 2019 Release

The 2015 release of this wine was wonderful, and we expect great things from the 2016 vintage as well. Sourced from Andrew Geoffrey's extraordinary 13-acre vineyard at 1850', near the summit of Diamond Mountain, where soils of pure white volcanic ash yield a wine of amazing color and depth.

Just 250 cases made

2016 HOWELL MOUNTAIN MERLOT

January 2019 Release

The Merlot grown on our Howell Mountain Candlestick Ridge Estate Vineyard is a fierce testament to what is possible for one of the great grapes in the world of wine. This gorgeous, up-front fruit merges with tremendous flesh and powerful structure.

2015 ROBERT'S BLOCK CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Summer 2019

The Robert's Block release is sourced from the highest section of our Winery Estate Vineyard, where fruit is particularly sparse and intense, even by Howell Mountain standards. This block is difficult and expensive and, frankly, a bit of pain in the ass. But the wine ... oh the wine! Don't lag when this notice goes out: just 25 cases were made.



SPOTLIGHT: CANDLESTICK RIDGE ESTATE VINEYARD

The 2015 releases are the first to include fruit from Candlestick Ridge Estate Vineyard, acquired in January of 2015. To get there, drive past the Winery Estate Vineyard, then Black Sears Vineyard ... all the way to the north end of the Howell Mountain summit cap at 2250' of elevation. This 26-acre vineyard, first planted in 1950, rests on a plateau overlooking the southeast face of Mount St. Helena and the whole of Pope Valley. Replanted by Duckhorn Winery in 1998 to primarily Bordeaux varieties on varying rootstocks, Candlestick Ridge produces wines that are dense, dark and explosive with flavor. The pure white volcanic ash and Tufa soils are poor and well drained leading to low yields and intensely flavored berries.

Candlestick is the northernmost vineyard in the Howell Mountain AVA and is slightly warmer than the summit ridge where the Winery Estate vineyard lies. The site is influenced by warm air from Pope Valley to the east and — at its slightly lower elevation — it is protected from the constant wind that hits the ridge line. With most of the big boulders removed during the re-plant there is a greater consistency within a vineyard block — still a thin Tufa soil layer on top of a rocky volcanic bedrock — yet the variation here is not as pronounced as that found on the summit ridge.

In 2015 we harvested 13 tons of Cabernet, 14 of Merlot, and 4 of Grenache and Syrah (combined). Incorporating this fruit to our wine program has had a profound and lasting effect on our Howell Mountain wine program. This spectacular fruit adds a broader spectrum of aroma and flavor to our wines, providing darker fruit aromatics and a fleshy, more opulent mid-palate than the summit ridge. As with our Winery Estate Vineyard, we are gradually converting this vineyard to a cane-pruned site in order to exert more control over the farming on a vine-by-vine basis. Candlestick Ridge is not only one of the greatest vineyard sites on Howell Mountain, it is truly singular in the world.

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

robertcraigwinery.com
f t i @robertcraigwinery