

2017 Cabernet Sauvignon

D. Rafanelli Vineyard
Dry Creek Valley

Vineyard

Doug Rafanelli grows Cabernet Sauvignon in a patchwork of vineyards dotting rugged hillsides on the west side of Dry Creek Valley. Labeling the soils there as “marginal” would be doing them a favor, as the vines struggle to support even 2 tons per acre in a good year. This bottling was blended from two low yielding blocks, Terraces and Mary’s, lying on south-facing slopes above the big bend on West Dry Creek Road, near Lambert Bridge. The southern exposure on thin, well-drained, gravelly soils accelerates ripening, and these blocks of Cab are always first into the winery.

Winemaking

Our Cabernet Sauvignon was painstakingly harvested by hand, its miniscule clusters and berries not even punching in at one and half tons to the acre. For this bottling, areas of the vineyard were isolated and separately crushed into one-ton fermenters. After 3 days of cold soak, a native fermentation began with wild yeasts. The cap was punched down three times per day through to the end of fermentation, and then pressed off immediately. The free run was racked to French oak for 22 months of aging, at which time 8 barrels (four new and four 2-year-old) were selected for this single vineyard bottling. The wine was bottled unfinned.

Tasting Notes

This 2017 Cabernet Sauvignon features aromas of ripe blackberry, plum and blueberry, and hints of earth and dried flowers. Oak and toast mesh completely into the flavors. The wine’s color is dense, and flavors of ripe berry and cherry ride a wave of firm but resolved tannins. While built for aging, this wine can be enjoyed now with heartier meals. Alcohol 14.6%

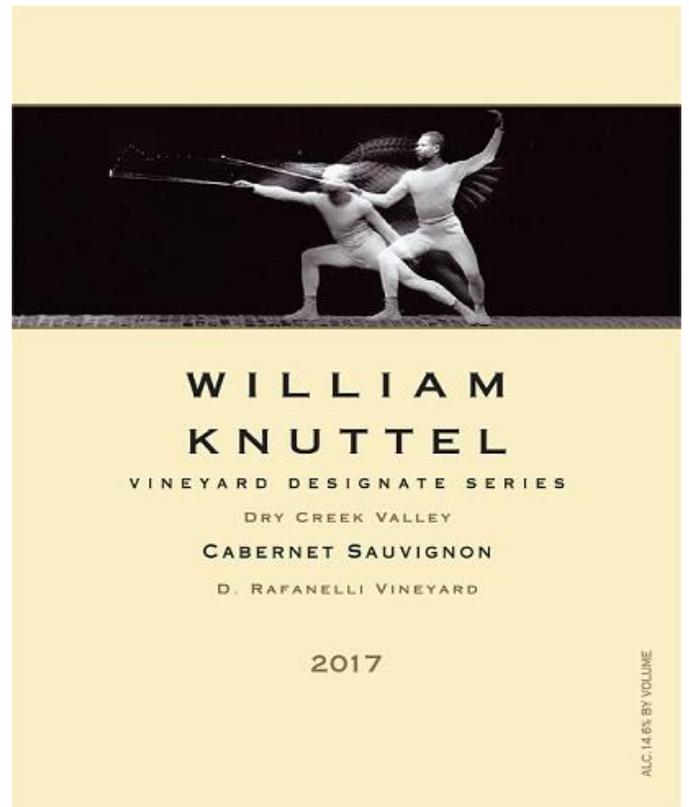
YIELD: 1.4 tons/acre

AGING: 22 months in French oak, 40% new, 60% 2 year-old

COOPERAGE: Tonnelleries O, Francois Freres

TA/pH: 5.7 g/L & 3.79 R.S.: 0.06 g/100ml

CASES: 188 (12 x 750ml)



William Knuttel was formerly Winemaker & Vice President with Chalk Hill Estate from 1996 to 2003, specializing in ultra-premium Cabernet Sauvignon, Chardonnay, & Sauvignon Blanc, and Dry Creek Vineyard’s Executive Winemaker from 2003 to 2011. As proprietor of Tria, 1995 to 2003, he produced fine Pinot Noir and Zinfandel. As Saintsbury’s winemaker from 1983 to 1996, Knuttel established that brand as a leader in ultra-premium Pinot Noir and Chardonnay.

ABOUT THE LABEL ART:

Designer Jeffrey Caldewey captured William Knuttel’s kinetic wine world with Etienne-Jules Marey’s 1890 “chronophotograph,” in which multiple exposures are superimposed to show the complete motion of “le coup d’eepe.” The image metaphorically highlights the balance, finesse, power and poise valued by the wine-maker.