

NINER

WINE ESTATES

2022

CABERNET FRANC

Heart Hill Vineyard, Willow Creek District of Paso Robles

WINEMAKER

Patrick Muran

CLONES

327, 12, 595, 169

ROOTSTOCK

1103P, 101-14

HARVEST DATES

September 1 & September 9, 2022

AVERAGE BRIX

25.8°

AVERAGE YIELD

1.3 Tons/Acre

pH / TA

3.76/5.6 g/L

ALCOHOL

14.6%

VINEYARD

100% Heart Hill Vineyard

BLEND

91% Cabernet Franc,
7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 2% Malbec

COOPERAGE

22% New French Oak

BARREL AGING

19 months



VINEYARD

The 2022 vintage will likely be remembered as one of the most challenging in the past two decades. It marked our third consecutive year of drought, with rainfall totaling just half of average. Fortunately, we received rain at the right time in March and April which enabled the development of healthy canopies. A generally cool and windy spring led to a below-average fruit set, which was offset by a flip to warm temperatures in June and July. The result was small berries, thick skins and intense concentration. The season culminated in a 10-day heatwave in late August and early September, which accelerated ripening across many varieties and triggered an unusually early and condensed harvest. We began picking on September 1 and finished by September 23—our earliest and fastest harvest since 2009. We hand-harvested our two blocks of Cabernet Franc at Heart Hill a week apart: block 30 (4 years old) on September 1st and Block 2 (15 years old) on September 9th.

WINEMAKING

We love Cabernet Franc for its dark red fruit, herbal lift, and firm tannins and our goal in the cellar was to highlight these natural traits rather than mask them. After sorting and destemming, we gravity-fed the grapes into stainless steel tanks for fermentation. To preserve freshness, we kept extraction gentle and reserved only the free-run juice for the final wine. Aged for 19 months, the wine rested partly in standard French oak barrels and partly in a larger 320-gallon oak vat. To keep the oak influence subtle, only 22% of the barrels were new. The result is a wine that opens with green leafy notes before unfolding into flavors of toasted rice, black raspberry, and dark baked bread, all carried by the long, savory phenolic backbone that defines Cabernet Franc.