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Veraison

# — THE — BIALE BULLETIN

*Preserving the Legacy of Zinfandel & Petite Sirah*

## Vintage 2016—It was in the cards!

Excellent vintages are usually characterized by ideal seasonal weather—you know, typical Northern California-style winter, spring, summer, and fall. The near-perfect 2016 growing season had good winter rainfall, started budding early, saw ideal summer weather conditions throughout Napa and Sonoma, and wrapped up before the valleys' first significant fall rainstorm arrived on October 14th. Thanks to a relatively moderate and mild July and August and then a series of warm days at the end of the growing season, our vineyards were able to progress to near-perfect ripeness. We are ecstatic and grateful for another excellent vintage, and we are chalking up the Biale 2016 as one of our favorite “poker hands” of all-time.

**Precipitation:** Following three consecutive years of significant rainfall deficits, rainfall in 2016 returned to Napa normal with about 24 inches along with a typical dry summer.

**Bud break:** It began slightly early around March 1st and lasted about two weeks until mid-March. Bud break is when the vines “wake up” from dormancy and we observe the appearance of new green growth.

**Growth:** A moderate growing season and summer ensued with diurnal swings of chilly nights in the '50s and warm days in the '80s and '90s. A couple of heat spikes in late August and late September were typical, but nothing extreme or dramatic occurred to adversely affect the fruit. The vines matured the fruit nicely and carried an average crop load.

**Fruit quality:** Biale began harvesting on August 29th with our Rosato of Sangiovese and culminated on September 29th with our late-ripening Barbera—a fairly compressed harvest time frame. Tonnage added up to average, just as Bob Biale and winemaker Tres Goetting expected. According to Tres, “My biggest worry was juggling tank space, creating room fast enough in the winery for all the beautiful grapes!” Tres adds, “Quality was excellent overall—some years you get dealt a great hand of cards and I think that the 2016’s are some of the best wines from Biale in a long time!”

Overall, the wines are characterized by deep color, fully-developed flavors, fresh acidity, and supple, sexy tannins. Have fun determining your favorites. The smart move: get extra to lay down in your cellar for ye shall be rewarded for your patience!

## Spring Happenings: Petite Sirah “Petite Masters” Event at C.I.A. Copia Draws a Great Turnout Biale is leading the charge of the comeback of Petite Sirah in Napa Valley!

On March 18<sup>th</sup> Biale teamed up with Aratas Winery, two dozen other Petite Sirah producers, and P.S. I Love You, to put on a seminar moderated by noted sommelier and writer Christopher Sawyer. “As a Napa Valley guy and huge Petite fan, I wanted to draw attention to the fact that there is a renewed and expanding interest in Petite Sirah by many of today’s top winemakers—and in Napa Valley in particular,” said Biale Co-Founder Dave Pramuk. Dave teamed up with Stephanie Douglas of Aratas, P.S. I Love You founder Jo Diaz, and the

Culinary Institute of America at Copia to produce the novel educational event. Savvy consumers are catching on to the quality attributes and value of this once ubiquitous varietal as witnessed by the sold out nature of the event and waiting list for tickets.

The illustrious panel of Napa Valley winemakers consisted of Tres Goetting (Biale), Mike Hirby (Relic), Russell Bevan (Chase), Aaron Pott (Quixote), and Tegan Passalacqua

(Turley). The winemakers each presented a current vintage of their Petite Sirah in Copia’s state-of-the-art demonstration theater. Christopher Sawyer, a Petite Sirah devotee, guided the lively discussion which included some gentle teasing and lighthearted disagreements among the panel. “I had a blast,” said Tres Goetting. “These guys are all friends and we all share a passion for this underdog grape—although it was apparent from the friendly debate that we take different approaches to making it.”





Photo Credit: Suzanne Karp

## 2016 Aldo's Vineyard Style and Substance

**Biale's old vines in Napa produce a plush and complex Zinfandel.**

This is where it all began. The signature vineyard for Robert Biale Vineyards—in one of the most unlikely locations you could imagine—considering that it is hidden among the neighborhoods of Napa!

This is the oldest vineyard in Napa Valley's Oak Knoll Appellation—planted in 1937. We owe its existence to Cristina Biale, “Nonna”, who acquired it through an old school Napa land swap deal, and Aldo Biale, Nonna's son, who nurtured and protected the vines through an era of a rapidly changing Napa Valley. Cabernet Sauvignon and Chardonnay became dominant varieties during the 1970s, but Aldo stuck with the variety he knew and counted on—Zinfandel. In addition to walnuts, prunes, and eggs, Zinfandel was the Biales' crop of choice and the grapes were typically sold each harvest to the Napa Valley Cooperative Winery and other large Napa Valley wineries of the era.

In 1991, we crushed and bottled 415 cases of our first wine under the Robert Biale Vineyards, “Aldo's Vineyard” label, and word spread among customers, stores, and sommeliers about a new style of Zinfandel that established a new standard in the whole category. All at once, the elegant, plush, zesty, vibrant, nuanced, and superbly balanced, Aldo's Vineyard Zinfandel was a sublime Zinfandel experience like no other. The 2016 season was very beneficial to Aldo's Vineyard, yielding a wine of depth and roundness, and it is certainly one of our all-time favorites from this family estate legacy vineyard. Only 325 cases produced.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** The Oak Knoll winegrowing region is prevalent in this wine with its dark color, ripe aromatics, and juicy acidity. Aromas of ripe strawberries, lavender, dried flowers, pear tart tatin, maple, and black cherry. The wine is concentrated yet fresh with an entry that is luxurious and pillowy soft. The tannins are supple and round. The wine is remarkably balanced with an elegant mouthwatering finish. It is immediately drinkable and worthy of 5 to 7 more years of cellar time.

Included in  
Shipment 4

## 2016 Black Chicken Party Lines and Passwords

Included in  
Shipments  
1, 2, 3 & 4

**Aldo Biale's ordering system, code name, and Zinfandel devotion.**

In the Napa Valley, the period following the repeal of Prohibition was relatively quiet. The hundreds of wineries that had dwindled to *only a few*, rose back to over a dozen by about 1960. This was an era of the family grape grower. Dozens of families north to south raised grapes as a crop to be sold to the valleys' wineries. Most commonly the red varieties were Zinfandel and Petite Sirah—the adopted “workhorse” grapes of California.

In the town of Napa during this era of the family farmer, the mother/son team of Cristina and Aldo Biale grew not only Zinfandel, but the classic Italian immigrant farming trifecta of prunes, walnuts, and white leghorn chickens. After Aldo lost his father in 1942, he realized that he could earn more for grapes in their fermented state, and he discreetly began putting up extra barrels of Zinfandel in his barn. The enterprising Aldo became popular among Napans with a yen for Zin and fresh eggs. He delivered jugs of his bootleg Zinfandel on Fridays—in a blue 1940 Studebaker.

However, a situation developed that required a certain level of discretion. How to order Aldo's illicit wine by phone without tipping off nosy neighbors or authorities? They might be listening in on the Biale's home phone service—the *party line*! Aldo hatched a solution: the code name for his bootleg Zinfandel became a “Black Chicken”.

This *party line*-based phone ordering system lasted for decades. For a while, so as not to complicate things for Aldo's Italian bride, Clementina, she didn't even know what callers meant by a “black chicken”. “*We only have the white ones*,” she would tell customers in her newly-learned English.

Today, Robert Biale Vineyards continues the tradition by producing a Black Chicken Zinfandel—although this version from our vineyards in Napa is *completely legal*. Red wine fans of all breeds are sure to flock to this fragrant and plush 2016. Who would have guessed Zinfandel could taste so refined?

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** Black cherry, cherry pit, dried fig, pomegranate, wild blackberry, fresh dark flowers, subtle dried herb, toasty brown spices, fruitcake aromas. On the palate this chicken is textured and supple, with gushing fruit and tempered with fresh acidity.



## A Luxurious 8 Day Cruise on the Po River and the Islands of Venice

April 28th–May 5th, 2019

Uncover the extraordinary hidden treasures of Venice and Northern Italy with Robert Biale Vineyards and Food & Wine Trails. Soak up the enchantment of “The City of Water” and three outer-lying Venetian islands, Burano, Mazzorbo and Torcello. Be treated to an exclusive evening with an opening and lighting ceremony at St. Mark's Basilica. Discover the charm of seaside Chioggia loved by fishermen and artists alike. Enjoy a multicourse lunch complete with wine pairings at a historic wine estate in Valpolicella. Explore medieval Padua, once home to Galileo and Copernicus; “bountiful” Bologna; and UNESCO-designated Ferrara,

plus so much more. Our travel agency partner, Food & Wine Trails, will be arranging optional excursions along with the complimentary Uniwold Shore Excursions. An optional pre-cruise Venice land program will also be available to start the adventure early!

The 130-passenger River Countess is a luxurious and sophisticated environment for your up-close, unsurpassed and unforgettable Italian adventure. This will be an unforgettable trip for wine and culinary die-hards hosted by Bob Biale and Dave Pramuk. Biale wines will be flowing daily onboard this all-inclusive cruise—it is like having your

own exclusive “Hotel Biale” among the scenic waters of Northern Italy.

To book your cabin, please contact Food & Wine Trails at 800-367-5348. <http://foodandwinetrails.com/biale2019>

We would love to have you join us and share in the joy and wonders of Northern Italy. For all of those who have reserved their cabin, we look forward to exploring Italy with you!

Saluté!  
Dave and Bob

To purchase: [www.biale.com](http://www.biale.com) | 707.257.7555 | [customerservice@biale.com](mailto:customerservice@biale.com)



# 2016 Falleri Vineyard

## A Vineyard Ladies' Legacy, Calistoga Zinfandel

Three generations of women have farmed  
a Calistoga landmark.

We have been making a Zinfandel from this little vineyard gem since 1993.

From Russian explorers to historic characters like Robert Louis Stevenson and Sam Brannan, winemakers, pioneers, immigrants, family farms, hot springs resorts, mud baths, an early gas station, and of course Zinfandel—Calistoga is an old western town with some colorful history! <http://www.sharpsteenmuseum.org/>

This old historic family vineyard is a slice of the old days of Calistoga—Napa Valley's northernmost viticultural appellation (AVA). Located at the cross of Lake Street and Falleri Drive, this is a remnant of vineyards that have been in the same family since the 1920s and is certified on the Registry of Historic Vineyards.

Argentina Falleri, an Italian immigrant, moved to Calistoga from the logging camps of the Mendocino coast in 1924 and took over the young vineyard. Argentina's family also farmed chickens and operated a gas station at the site. After the Argentina era, her daughter, Olivia Heitz, assumed stewardship of the family vineyard. Today, Olivia Heitz's daughter, Sonya Spencer, who dutifully volunteered at the Sharpsteen Museum for many years, proudly continues the women's tradition—minus the chickens, eggs, and filling station.

Located on the east edge of Calistoga with a clear view of Mount St. Helena, the Falleri Vineyard and its 300 old, gnarly vines, produces elegant, zesty Zins that are always darlings of ours and have a spectrum of fresh red and black fruits and elegant, dusty tannins. Only 95 cases produced.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** Aromas of apricot, pink taffy, yellow plum, and dried strawberry. Medium bodied with light delicate tannins, subtle toasty spices, and a snappy acidity. This is a wine which will pair well with many fares.

## Black Chicken Society Benefit Spotlight

Robert Biale Vineyards has partnered with Napa Valley hotels to offer our members exclusive offers and rates when visiting the beautiful Napa Valley. Our partnerships include: The Archer Hotel, Hotel Yountville, Napa Valley Marriott, River Terrance Inn Napa, Senza Hotel, Southbridge Napa Valley, and The Estate (Vintage House and Hotel Villaggio).

Inquire with the Biale Wine Club Team for special rates and other exciting member benefits!



*Biale team field trip to Grande Vineyard with Dorothy Rossi.*

## 2016 Grande Vineyard

### A Secret Portal to Old Napa

Included in  
Shipment 4

It's hard to believe that this kind of family legacy farm with its old vines vineyard still exists in modern era Napa Valley. Credit the Rossi family and their indomitable spirit of devotion to the land and family tradition.

Theodosio Grande came to America from Venice, Italy, in 1919 and planted this vineyard the year his daughter Dorothy was born in 1920. Incredibly enough, (do the age math) Dorothy *still* helps her son, Tony Rossi, take care of the family property and vineyard. The chickens get Dorothy's daily attention, and if your timing is good, eggs, pears, walnuts, and prunes are available for purchase. Dorothy expressed, *"I enjoyed the outdoors from the very beginning. My sister was not interested in the outdoors like I was. I liked watching my father do all the work on the ranch...I just loved it."*

The vineyard is a hidden gem off the Silverado Trail near the town of Napa, and Dorothy's farm cottage is as pristine as the day it was built by her father, Theodosio Grande, a century ago. And oh the wine that comes from Theodosio's stalwart old original vines! Remarkable indeed. Only 425 cases produced.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** Layers of aromatics including red plum, strawberry, graham cracker, peach, dried herbs, currants, and white pepper. Soft entry with medium weight that is fresh and supple. Building tannins, with flavors of blackberry, quince, and spiced cake. This wine has a long finish showing great aging potential.

# Biale Receives Both Land and Winery Green Certifications!

We are proud and honored for having recently been one of only 30 wineries in Napa Valley to receive both the Land and Winery Green certifications. We feel strongly that abiding by sustainable practices in both our farming and winemaking is the responsible thing to do and is beneficial to our environment, our community, our employees, our business...and our wines!

As Bob Biale puts it, "It took us three years of refining our farming and winery practices to finally achieve our official certifications, but in the end it was all worth it!"

## Napa Green Land

Land owners in the Napa Green Certified Land program assess all aspects of their property including farming practices, roads and waterways. Following an evaluation, land owners implement measures to retain soils and prevent erosion, identify and reduce harmful inputs and runoff, conserve water resources, and restore wildlife habitats to protect biodiversity.

Land owners and managers ensure the health and vitality of their piece of Napa Valley's ecosystem by developing a customized farm conservation plan. By implementing best practices across an entire property, Napa Green Land takes a holistic approach to sustainability.

Farm plans are facilitated and audited by the Fish Friendly Farming and LandSmart programs.

## Napa Green Winery

The Napa Green Winery program supports and sustains the long-term perspective of the land program, with a focus on crafting quality wines while conserving water, energy, and reducing waste.

The program facilitates an integrated assessment of the wine production process by evaluating the various resources it takes to produce and distribute wine. Napa

Green wineries implement 100+ measures that go beyond compliance to conserve resources, prevent waste and enhance the efficiency of their operations—all while engaging employees on the path to winery sustainability.

Wineries are certified by the Napa County Department of Public Works and the California Green Business Program.

**NAPA GREEN**

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# 2016 Monte Rosso Vineyard

## Peak Flavors on Moon Mountain

**Winemakers covet the fruit from one of the world's greatest old vineyards.**

Among California's oldest and grandest vineyards, Monte Rosso sprawls across the western flank of the Mayacamas Mountains overlooking the entire Sonoma Valley—from Carneros to Russian River. The vineyard's reddish, iron-laden soil inspired Louis M. Martini to name the old vineyard Monte Rosso (Red Mountain) when he purchased it after Prohibition, in 1937. Monte Rosso was first planted in the Wild West era of the 1860s then replanted in the 1880s by the Goldstein family. Some of the ranch has been replanted but many of the old vines have been preserved by the Louis M. Martini and Gallo families since 1938. This vineyard produces phenomenal red wines that are cherished by winemakers and Zinfandel lovers for their lasting structure and deep character. Only 350 cases produced.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** Aromas of white peach, cherry blossom, açai berry, and red vine licorice, as well as cinnamon, wild iris, and ginger. A lively entry with good weight enhances the minerality and the zesty, natural acidity of this wine. Mountain tannins assure us of this wine's graceful aging potential.



Included in  
Shipment 3



# 2016 Pagani Ranch Vineyard

## A Sonoma Valley Icon

**A mother and son team perpetuates heritage Zinfandel vines in Sonoma Valley.**

This historic vineyard in Sonoma Valley is one of California's most recognized for producing decades of great wines—a Zinfandel lover's dream! When you drive through Sonoma Valley up Highway 12, it is certainly one of the most picturesque: huge, twisting, old vines, the old white barn and farmhouse, and the Sonoma Mountain backdrop.

Felice Pagani came to America from Fenegro, Italy, with a dream in 1883. He began farming wine grapes in the booming Sonoma Valley at Monte Rosso and at the Judge Cook vineyards. Years later, Felice was able to acquire two adjoining vineyards and began his own operation. Decades later, famed winemakers, such as Paul Draper at Ridge and Tom Mackey at St. Francis, took the old vines at Pagani to icon status with a series of vineyard-designated Zinfandels.

Today, Felice's granddaughter, Norma Pagani Amantite and her son, Dino Amantite, still personally care for Felice's legacy vines from the 1800s and are ensuring with new plantings that the family tradition of growing prime Zinfandel continues to the next generations.

Pagani is a classic example of the old style California field blend. Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, Alicante Bouschet, Lenoir, and Grand noir are intermixed in the vineyard and form a complex and unified whole. The 2016 season had the effect of amplifying Pagani's plummy fruit and rich texture. Only 200 cases produced.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** Beautiful dark color with aromas of blackberry, ripe plum, tobacco, fig, chocolate, prosciutto, and toasted vanilla oak. Dark fruits meet red fruits (rhubarb and pomegranate) on the palate. An integrated package of fat tannins and pleasing taut acidity. This is a big, structured Zinfandel to watch develop over months and years to come.

# 2016 Stagecoach Vineyard

## Zinfandel Elevated

On the rugged plateau above Oakville at 1200 feet in elevation, looking out over the entire Napa Valley, lies the highly-respected and sought-after Stagecoach Vineyard. In the old Wild West days, gentleman bandit, Black Bart, used to hide out up there at this remote site and hold up stagecoaches on their way over to the next county. Many of Napa Valley's finest Cabernet Sauvignons, Merlots, Rhone varietals, Chardonnays, and blends from a who's who of Napa Valley's elite producers are coming from this acclaimed site. Stagecoach, a wine world unto itself, is unique enough to perhaps one day merit its own appellation status.

In 1999, we began collaborating with Stagecoach founder, Jan Krupp, to establish a Zinfandel vineyard in order to preserve Zinfandel in Napa Valley and take Zinfandel to the next level. Considering the commitment of prime land and resources, we can unabashedly say that Stagecoach is the most significant planting of Zinfandel in the modern era of Napa Valley.

The similarities between the great Monte Rosso and Stagecoach vineyards are striking. As Monte Rosso presides over Sonoma Valley, Stagecoach presides over Napa Valley, just above Oakville and below Pritchard Hill. Soaking up the bright, high altitude sun, Stagecoach lies above the marine layer of fog that encroaches on Napa and Sonoma Valleys during the summer months. The extra sunlight and challenging, rocky red soils combine to crank up the grapes' volume to produce an extraordinary red wine of finesse, power, and complexity. Only 419 cases produced.

Included in  
Shipment 3



**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** The 2016 Stagecoach is not just a captivating Zinfandel, but a serious red wine that shows the traits of what makes Napa Valley red wines in demand around the world. Layered, nuanced, sophisticated, and redolent with bold and ripe aromatics, this wine explodes out of the glass with wild blackberries, jasmine blossom, cola, notes of dried sage, wild iris, and compote of mixed berries. Firm and succulent mid-palate tannins make for a long and juicy finish. This is a Zinfandel to drink and keep for five years or more.

To purchase: [www.biale.com](http://www.biale.com) | 707.257.7555 | [customerservice@biale.com](mailto:customerservice@biale.com)



# 2016 Gaudi Carli Vineyard Barbera

## A Little Northern Italy in Northern Napa Valley

Nine acres. That's *it*. That's the amount of Barbera in the entire 46,000 acres of Napa Valley. Our Barbera is from a scant one acre of those 9 acres—*old vines*, no less!

When you savor this delightful and extremely rare wine, you may ponder as we do, “Why doesn't Napa Valley produce more Barbera?” The answer is economics and summed up in two words: Cabernet Sauvignon.

Regardless of economics, Napa Valley's Mediterranean climate is an ideal environment for the myriad grape varieties of the world, and dozens of red and white grape varieties were planted here in Napa Valley's formative years, and decades thereafter. In modern times, really since 1970, it has been Cabernet Sauvignon that has come to dominate vineyards and production and

as a casualty, we have lost most of Napa Valley's heritage vineyards and varieties.

Gaudi Carli planted the vineyard in Calistoga with Barbera vines in 1925, and it has remained under his family's stewardship to this day. Today, the grandson, Steve Torrigino, oversees this rare gem and sliver of Napa Valley viticulture history. Only 46 cases produced!

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** Rustic red fruits fill the nose along with Bing cherry, plum, Iris, cinnamon, and root beer. Medium light bodied with fleshy tannins lend way to some earthier Barbera flavors of cassis, blackberry, and porcini mushroom. This Old World style wine has a nice balance of fresh acidity which makes for a mouthwatering finish.



## Cork Q&A with Winemaker Tres Goetting

**Q: Tres, you just returned from a winemaker's trip to Portugal. Sounds fun and fascinating—why Portugal and how did that come about?**

A: The Biale cork supplier (Amorim) took a handful of winemakers to Portugal for an educational tour of the cork forests and production facilities so that we are aware of the entire process from start to finish. The Quercus Suber forests in Portugal produce 50% of the world's cork supply.

**Q: Are the cork oak trees planted like a commercial forest or are the trees wild?**

A: The cork trees are planted with purpose, but there are several wild and sporadic areas of forest. They do not need to plant the trees in rows because the cork is harvested every nine years from individual trees that are all at different stages of development. This allows for a sustainable system with long term supply. This system also allows for a more diverse and natural ecosystem which favors other flora and fauna to thrive.

**Q: What parts of the trees are used for making wine bottle corks?**

A: The bark that is harvested for cork production comes from the base of the trees and up into the lower part of the branches. The thickness and quality of this bark varies greatly and is sorted in the production facilities accordingly. In general, the cork bark is around 3-4 inches thick and the corks are punched out of the center of these harvested strips of bark. (See photo)

**Q: Are the trees damaged as a result of stripping off their bark?**

A: No. The bark is just a natural insulator and protective covering for the tree. Stripping the bark does not damage the wood beneath the cork or the internal structure of the tree. The trees are able to continue with normal photosynthesis and evapotranspiration processes after the bark is removed and the periderm and cork cambium immediately start to regenerate.

**Q: About how many corks can you get from one tree? Are they at risk of running out of cork material?**

A: On average, a typical tree can produce around 4,000 corks. However, the number of corks per tree depends on the age, size of the tree, and how thick the cork grows on certain trees. Once the trees reach 25 years of age, they start their nine year harvest cycle. They produce more and more cork each cycle as the trees continue to grow. This nine year harvest cycle also insures that the cork material will be sustainable and not run out for the life span of the tree, which is about 300 years.

**Q: What is a “corked” wine? How can someone determine if a wine is “corked”?**

A: “Corked” wine is a wine that has been tainted with TCA which are chemical compounds known as 2, 4, 6-Trichloroanisole. These compounds do not occur naturally but are created when some fungi are treated with chlorinated phenolic compounds or antimicrobial agents used in the processing of wood. This compound is the main reason for the problems associated with mold likely to be found in cork. Everyone has a different threshold for being able to detect TCA in wine. Generally, TCA has an odor and taste that can be described as resembling wet cardboard, moldy newspaper, wet dog or damp basement. At lower levels, TCA can mute the fruit profile of a wine and make it seem dull, boring or diluted. TCA is perfectly harmless to humans but very frustrating to winemakers.

**Q: Is it possible to tour cork factories in Portugal like you did?**

A: It is possible to visit the cork forests in Portugal, but to tour a production facility like I did was a very special treat. You must have an invitation from someone within the cork

company for a couple of reasons. First, they have several proprietary production processes that they do not want others to know about. This is especially true in the laboratory and research areas. We were not allowed to take pictures in several areas of the processing plant. Secondly, these facilities are incredibly loud, dusty, and can be very dangerous as there is a lot of big machinery and equipment running.

**Q: Any insider tips for travel in Portugal?**

A: To visit the cork forests, you will want to travel to the middle of Portugal to an area called Alentejo. This is a magical place that is lightly populated and has gliding plains and sudden mountains. The cork trees will appear gradually on the sides of the road until eventually you find yourself surrounded by them. They look naked and bizarre if they have just been harvested. One of my other favorite places was Lisbon. This city reminded me very much of our San Francisco, but with an older charm. There are even cable cars running on sloped streets and the red 25th April Bridge spanning the skyline with views of the marina. The city of Porto was the highlight of the trip for me. It was filled with cobblestone streets with colorful old buildings that line the Douro River. There are two bridges at either end of the city which allow the old Port boats to sail in to deliver their barrels. There are numerous Port houses that you can visit for tastings and most have spectacular views of the city. The people are very friendly and the Mediterranean food is incredible. I would love to go back again someday. Perhaps I will suggest that more “research” is needed for our Biale corks.





# 2016 Palisades Vineyard

## A Rockin' Calistoga Petite Sirah

The eastern ridge of Calistoga features the spectacular rock formation called the Palisades. These dramatic west-facing cliffs are composed of igneous rock and were formed from volcanic upheaval millennia ago. The lofty formation stretches for over two miles and reaches elevations of over 3000 feet. No wonder the farmland below is ideally suited to red wine grapes. An active creek bed, stones, gravel, and well-drained soil, not to mention extended sunlight, are ideal conditions for ripening grapes for massive red wines such as this.

Included in  
Shipment 4

Domenico Barberis saw the potential. An amazing coincidence—the young immigrant was from the same village in Italy, Murialdo, as Bob Biale's grandmother—Cristina “Nonna” Biale. Barberis came to Calistoga in 1902, and soon thereafter, was able to start a vineyard and ranch with his large family on a scenic property below the Palisades Mountains, along Horns Creek. The old barn on the property was designated as Bonded Winery No. 118, making this a truly California landmark vineyard.

Today, Felicia Woytak and husband Steve Rasmussen carefully farm the ranch and maintain the vineyard's historic legacy—selling their amazing Petite Sirah from the old head-trained vines to a list of prominent winemakers who prize the fruit. Felicia and Steve are also devoted land stewards and work to conserve the unspoiled lands that surround the picturesque Palisades Ranch. Only 344 cases produced.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** A dramatic vineyard which produces dramatic wines. Inky, dark color with aromas of dusty blue and black fruits, dark plum, licorice, and purple flowers. A clean, bright entry leads to flavors of black currants, quince, boysenberry, and baking chocolate. The wine manages to retain a sense of refinement while coating the entire palate with deep structured tannins. A true pleasure to drink now and could be a cellar treasure for at least a decade.



Fathers and Sons: Bob & Alex Biale, Dave & Zach Pramuk, Biale Wedding, Summer 2018

# 2015 Like Father Like Son

## A Napa Valley Petite Sirah Blend

Included in  
Shipment 3

Petite Sirah was once the most planted grape variety in Napa Valley. Like the immigrant pioneers, it was hardy and adaptable. Sturdy, strong, inky-dark, and deeply fruity, “Pet” or “Petta Sara” as the old-timers called it, was the workhorse for commercial and home winemakers who used it for blending into underpowered red wines of all varieties from Cabernet to Zinfandel. In Like Father Like Son, we hit on a blend we love: combining it with what we now know is the genetic “father” of Petite Sirah—Syrah—the great red grape of France's norther Rhône Valley. The grapes' textures and flavors enhance each other beautifully. In this 2015 version, winemaker Tres Goetting introduced some rustic Spanish flair to the blend by incorporating a little Tempranillo from a small vineyard in St. Helena. We know you are going to love the result, and want to save some for future drinking enjoyment and savoring.

This Like Father Like Son was aged in barrels for 18 months. The blend is comprised of 60% Petite Sirah, 20% Syrah and 20% Tempranillo. Only 330 cases produced.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** Fragrant with blackberry cobbler, plum, blueberries and violets. A full bodied wine with a gentle grip of tannin and a long and satisfying finish. This is a superb rendition of a classic Napa Valley red wine—showing all the attributes of this world renowned valley. Some years in the cellar will broaden the palate even further and add more graceful notes to its already broad spectrum of aromas.

# The Black Chicken Society

The entire Robert Biale Vineyards crew would like to express our deepest appreciation to our Black Chicken Society for the continued confidence in our wines! We take great satisfaction and joy in growing and producing wines for you from the historic varieties and vineyards that were the foundational grapes of the California wine industry. In every case, these vineyards come with many wonderful, sweet, and sincere family stories! Most importantly, we realize that it is your patronage and appreciation that really propels this heritage vineyards movement forward to the next level.

## 2018 Fall Billing and Shipping Schedule

### Shipment 3

Bill: August 13 • Arrives: Aug 16-29  
Pick up: August 14-December 10  
2016 Black Chicken Zinfandel  
2016 Monte Rosso Vineyard Zinfandel  
2016 Stagecoach Vineyard Zinfandel  
2015 Like Father Like Son Red Wine

### Shipment 4

Bill: October 29 • Arrives: Nov 1-14  
Pick up: October 30-December 10  
2016 Black Chicken Zinfandel  
2016 Aldo's Vineyard Zinfandel  
2016 Grande Vineyard Zinfandel  
2016 Palisades Vineyard Petite Sirah

### Custom Club

#### Fall Shipment

Ordering Begins: September 4  
Order Deadline: October 1

### Holiday Magnum Club

Bill: October 29 • Arrives: Nov 1-14 • Pick up: October 30-December 10  
Each year our Winemaker, Tres Goetting, puts together a reserve blend that comes in a special magnum with a screen printed label with red wax at the top. The blend is only bottled in magnums and only Holiday Magnum Members receive it. Best of all it arrives at your home in time to grace your holiday table!  
*To Join: You must be a member of Black Chicken Society (Level 1, 2, 3 or Custom).*

Deadline to pick up fall club shipments: December 10.



Palisades Vineyard Cluster

To purchase: [www.biale.com](http://www.biale.com) | 707.257.7555 | [customerservice@biale.com](mailto:customerservice@biale.com)



# 2016 Royal Punishers

## A Petite Sirah Comeback

The Carpy Conolly Ranch Petite Sirah vineyard in Rutherford is a boon to the variety's comeback.

We now know from genetic research that Petite Sirah is also Durif—a grape that was born in Southern France in the 1880s. The parents were Syrah and Peloursin and the agronomist at Montpellier University that discovered the cross was Francois Durif, who named the new grape variety after himself. O.K., *pourquoi pas?* (*Why not?*)

The new grape was avoided—prone to rot and mildew in France—but made its way to California where it flourished beautifully in the sunny conditions and arid climate. It blended extremely well—adding structure and dark fruit to many grape varieties that sometimes need some added muscle, including Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon, and blends.

When a new wave of winemakers descended on Napa Valley in the '60s and '70s to produce wines from classic French varieties such as Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon, and Merlot, many of the old Petite Sirah vines disappeared. After the legendary *Judgement at Paris*, Petite Sirah's fate was, for all intents and purposes, doomed. Acreage declined precipitously along with many other heritage varieties i.e. Zinfandel, Carignane, Mataro, Riesling, Chenin Blanc, Mondeuse, Napa Gamay and many others. A few Petite Sirah vineyards survived in Calistoga, St. Helena, and Stag's Leap, but Petite Sirah dropped from nearly 25% of Napa to less than 0.5%.

Enter grape (and cattle) rancher Tom Gamble in 1999 with a modest proposal to plant an acre at the C.C. Ranch for Robert Biale Vineyards—a young winery at that time that had already established a track record for Petite Sirah and Zinfandel success.

Budwood was sourced from noble heritage sites and the vineyard was planted, which started to produce in 2002. Since then, the C.C. Ranch Petite Sirah project has expanded to a whopping 3 acres and has become our prime source for this hedonistic varietal. Inky, layered, juicy, and round, this Rutherford red wine shows the character and smooth structure for which the subregion is world famous.

The mystery of the name Royal Punishers is not as ominous as it appears. Rearrange the letters just so and—*voilà!*—you have identified Petite Sirah's French parents—Syrah and Peloursin.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** The 2016 Royal Punishers has a healthy deep, dark blue/black color profile. Aromas of plum, quince, violets, figs, molasses, graphite, and marbled rye awaken the nose. The entry is viscous and weighty, then builds into a broad mid-palate structure which has layers of ripe, black fruit flavors. The oak profile is balanced and the tannins are mouth-watering and medium-grained which hold the fruit profile and carry a long, lingering finish.

# 2015 E.B.A. Petite Sirah

## A Petite for the Long Haul

Petite Sirah is amazingly adaptable—the vineyardist's friend—performing so well for so long in so many California appellations—especially Napa Valley. In the winery, Petite Sirah lends itself quite well to our blends, (see Biale Like Father Like Son and Basic Black) enhancing almost any red wine. Perhaps Petite Sirah's strongest suit is longevity. The grape is known by winemakers and wine collectors to age slowly and gracefully for decades revealing underlying fruit and character as the tannins round and soften.

In this particular special case, in certain vintages, we set aside a small lot of Petite Sirah for additional aging in barrel. This “extended barrel aging” has a time-honored legacy in Italy (Riserva), and Spain (Reserva and Gran Reserva). This slow process cannot be accelerated or sped up and only time in barrel can achieve the desired result: added length, deepened flavors, heightened aromatics, and mid-palate roundness.

In 2015, Winemaker Tres Goetting saw some great potential in a lot from Mark Oberschulte's small vineyard in Chiles Valley, which every year produces Petite Sirah with depth and backbone. This Petite Sirah was left to age in French Oak for a total of 30 months and produced a memorable red wine that is hedonistic to drink now and will continue to age gracefully for a decade or two to come. Only 75 cases were produced.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** Black cherry, dark plum, fig, black tea, vanilla wafer. Soft and weighty entry with opulent black fruits layered with masculine tannins that build to a long, wet finish.



## From the Founders - THANK YOU!

Continuing a Biale family tradition begun in 1937, we Napa natives teamed up in 1991 to launch a personal mission to become Napa Valley's preservationists of historic vineyards... Napa's little house of Zinfandel and Petite Sirah.

The more we work with these varieties and vineyards, the more we appreciate the intuition, wisdom, and labors of our immigrant forefathers. Great wines like these speak to us directly from the soils of old sites through the vine, and reveal to us what the first winemakers were thinking and working toward as immigrant pioneers on the California frontier. Now, we get to carry their work forward for the next generation of winemakers!

To you, loyal members in the Black Chicken Society and the Biale Beloved, we would like to express a deeply felt “THANK YOU”.

Verum Gallinaceorum! (*There is truth in Chicken!*)

Dave Pramuk and Bob Biale  
Founders, Robert Biale Vineyards

## Line Up For Class...

Attention Biale fans... Do you still have ol' schoolmates you have known since FIRST GRADE?

Biale founders, Napa natives, and lifetime schoolmates Bob and Dave will be officially announcing later this year their reserve Napa Valley Zinfandel from the 2016 Vintage—FIRST GRADE. Just four barrels of this special selection will be offered initially to members of the Black Chicken Society. FIRST GRADE is destined to be a collectible new benchmark label for Napa Valley Zinfandel. If you have not yet done so, become a member of the Black Chicken Society and stay tuned to the “Chicken Channel” so you don't miss out.

## Who or What is “Aldo's Gems?”

Aldo's GEMS are Biale customers who exceed \$1,000 in yearly wine purchases. Aldo's GEMS members will have a monthly opportunity to secure a wine of the month with a specialty offer. There will be access to low production Robert Biale Vineyards wines—most of which, as you know, are very scarce and sell out quickly!

An additional benefit of reaching Aldo's GEMS status is that you are also automatically enrolled in the GEMS program—a multi-winery referral network. This program gives you enhanced benefits by providing exclusive rewards and opportunities at other celebrated, family-owned Napa and Sonoma wineries.

The idea behind the Napa & Sonoma Valley GEMS program is simple...over the years we have developed special relationships with a handful of our wine country partners. We share an admiration for each other's wines and experiences, and we thought, “If we love these wineries and the wines they produce, why wouldn't our customers love them?” Thus, the Napa & Sonoma GEMS program was created.

2018 GEMS wineries include: B Wise Vineyards, Chappellet Vineyard, Flora Springs Winery, Frog's Leap Winery, Hall Rutherford, La Rochelle Wines, Medlock Ames, Patz & Hall, Robert Biale Vineyards, Robert Craig Winery, VGS Chateau Potelle, Vineyard 29, and Walt Wines.

Secure your Aldo's GEMS status for 2019!

To purchase: [www.biale.com](http://www.biale.com) | 707.257.7555 | [customerservice@biale.com](mailto:customerservice@biale.com)



# Robert Biale Vineyards Fall 2018 Wine Offering

	Price	Society Price
2016 Aldo's Vineyard Zinfandel	\$85	\$76
2016 Black Chicken Zinfandel	\$48	\$43
2016 Falleri Vineyard Zinfandel	Wine Club Exclusive Please Inquire	
2016 Grande Vineyard Zinfandel	\$52	\$47
2016 Monte Rosso Vineyard Zinfandel	\$68	\$61
2016 Pagani Ranch Zinfandel	\$52	\$47

	Price	Society Price
2016 Stagecoach Vineyard Zinfandel	\$58	\$52
2016 Gaudi Carli Barbera	Wine Club Exclusive Please Inquire	
2016 Palisades Vineyard Petite Sirah	\$58	\$52
2016 Royal Punishers Petite Sirah	\$48	\$43
2015 Like Father Like Son Red Blend	\$50	\$45
2015 E.B.A. Petite Sirah	\$75	\$67
Please inquire about the availability of our large format bottles.		

**How to order:** Give us a call at (707) 257-7555, email [customerservice@biale.com](mailto:customerservice@biale.com), or visit [www.biale.com](http://www.biale.com).



## The Robert Biale Vineyards Tasting Room Experiences

Relax amongst the vineyards and savor the Napa Valley’s natural splendor. Revel in the tasting and take advantage of the opportunity to purchase rare and iconic wines that are honored by wine professionals and represent over a century of California winemaking history.

**The Valley Vista.** This relaxed and leisurely seated tasting among the vineyards on the winery’s back porch offers one of the great views of California wine country and a tasting selection like no other. Biale’s affable Wine Educators guide you through a personalized overview of Napa Valley, historic vineyards, family farming history, and the fine points of appreciating world class Zinfandel, Petite Sirah, and Biale’s rare blends.

**The Zinner Sanctum.** For those looking to delve into tasting and purchasing rare wines with the patina of bottle age, the Zinner Sanctum offers a quiet, intimate, and focused tasting environment. Discuss the fine points and advantages of cellaring, review past vintages and the potential of laying down Biale wines in your personal cellar.

**The Aldo’s House.** Our most elevated experience offered. Warm, homey, and personalized for your small group, the Aldo’s house harkens to the bygone days of rural Napa. This secluded venue on the Biale winery property affords our

guests the chance to gather and carefully taste through a selection of our current Biale wines paired with hand selected artisan cheeses while discussing our Napa Valley vineyards and Biale family history.

**The Founders Tour.** For small groups seeking an understanding of Biale winemaking, viticulture, and Napa Valley’s history and world renowned attributes, The Founders Tour is the deep dive into all things Biale. Your host (don’t be surprised if it’s Dave or Bob themselves!) will discuss old vine viticulture, lead a stroll through the cellar, explore crush and fermentation protocols, offer a taste of a future wine directly from barrel, and offer a selection of the latest Biale wines to taste.

Reservations are required for all tasting experiences. To book reservations, please call the winery: (707) 257-7555, email: [tastingroom@biale.com](mailto:tastingroom@biale.com) or book online: <https://shop.biale.com/visit-us>.

*“Robert Biale Vineyards is hardly the only Napa winery making Zinfandel. But it’s certainly one of the very few that put Zinfandel front and center... This is Zinfandel at its best... Tastings on the outdoor patio are relaxed; though reservations are required, the experience feels casual, with tasting room hosts attending to you at your table. The pleasure of Biale’s single-vineyard Zinfandels is in their ability to balance rich components—lush, concentrated fruit—with fresh acidity and mineral notes.”*

Esther Mobley, **The 52 California Wineries You Need To Visit In 2018**, *The Press*, San Francisco Chronicle, Jan. 2018.

## Are you a Black Chicken Society Member?

Members receive a bottle of Black Chicken Zinfandel in every shipment as well as a selection of our single-vineyard Zinfandels, Petite Sirahs, and proprietary red wines. Ensure access to bottles of Biale’s new vintage releases—even tailor your shipments as you prefer.

Visit [www.biale.com/join](http://www.biale.com/join) for a full list of Black Chicken Society Club levels, the complete list of wonderful benefits, and how to join. We look forward to welcoming you to the flock!

# Upcoming Events

**August 25**  
***Fall Wines Celebration at Robert Biale Vineyards***  
**New releases, food, music, & fun!**  
**Main Event**  
Time: 1-4 PM  
Price: \$55 | Club \$40 | 5+ Year Members Free!  
Reservations are required for the main event.  
**Horizontal Vineyard Designate Tasting with Tres, Bob & Dave.**  
Time: 12-1:30 PM. Seated tasting to be held before main event.  
Price: Sold Out, wait list available

**September 7, 14, 21, 28, October 5, 12**  
***Harvest Tours!***  
**A deep dive into all things harvest while enjoying the fruits of the labor!**  
Time: Tours begin at 9:30 AM  
Price: \$55 | Club \$30  
Reservations Required

**September 22**  
***Zinfandel: Stories from Napa Valley at CIA Copia, Napa***  
An exquisite afternoon presented by ZAP. Start with a seated panel presentation, discussion, and tasting featuring four leaders in Napa Valley Zinfandel. Adjourn to a walkabout tasting of up to 30 Napa Valley wineries pouring with paired bites from the talented chefs at the CIA. Details to come:  
[https://zinfandel.org/events/zinfandelstories\\_napa/](https://zinfandel.org/events/zinfandelstories_napa/)

**September 29**  
***Al Fresco Harvest Dinner at Robert Biale Vineyards***  
**Sunset dinner under the Sycamores!**  
Time: 6:30 PM  
Price: \$125 | Club \$100  
Reservations Required

**November 10**  
***Cellar Treasures Holiday Dinner at Robert Biale Vineyards***  
**Celebrating a joyous year with our cellar riches!**  
Time: 6:30 PM  
Price: \$175 | Club \$150  
Reservations Required

**Attention All Desert Dwellers! Save the date.**  
**Biale Winemaker, Tres Goetting, will be hosting two dinners in Arizona in November.**  
Capital Grille, Scottsdale, AZ, Nov. 15th  
Wrigley Mansion, Phoenix, AZ, Nov. 16th  
Details to come.

**December 9**  
***Members Only Pick-Up Party at Robert Biale Vineyards***  
**This is the last day for members to pick up their fall wine club shipments!**  
Time: 1-4 PM  
Members only. Reservations required.

**April 28, 2019 to May 05, 2019**  
***8 Day Cruise on the Po River and the Islands of Venice***  
Join winery partners, Bob Biale and Dave Pramuk, aboard Uniworld’s River Countess as this round-trip Venice itinerary explores “The City of Water” and three outer-lying Venetian islands, Burano, Mazzorbo and Torcello. For full details of the cruise itinerary and boat, please visit: <http://foodandwinetrails.com/biale2019>

For full event details and tickets, please visit [www.biale.com/events](http://www.biale.com/events).