

— R O B E R T —
BIALE
V I N E Y A R D S

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2018 VAROZZA VINEYARD

St. Helena Appellation Zinfandel

THE REAL DEAL

We tend to forget these days that Napa Valley was founded not by faceless consortiums or companies, but by families. Hard-working farming families that plowed and grinded out a life season by season raising crops by which they made their livings, paid their bills and raised their children. According to the Napa Valley Vintners, Napa Valley which grows only 4% of California wine is surprisingly still 95% family-owned. There still remain a small number of those families that are Napa Valley originals. The Varozzas are one of those.

Jack and Diana Varozza run the same ranch that goes back to Napa's earliest days in the 1800's and has been in their family for over a century – Jack being the grandson of Joseph Varozza and son of Harold Varozza who worked the ranch over their lifetimes.

At the northern edge of their 40 acres in St. Helena bordering York Creek is a patch of classic head-trained Zinfandel vines that, heading south, connects to a younger block of trellised vines. Jack farms it all himself and Biale is the glad recipient of their prime fruit. What delicious Zinfandel they make!

Vintage Notes: Seamless season of heavenly hangtime and phenomenal phenolic development. February saw abundant rains, followed by lots of filtered light in spring and early summer. Both bud break and flowering occurred a bit late, but under ideal weather conditions, creating plentiful and even fruit set. Summer brought generous sun during the day and cooler marine influences, virtually uninterrupted by major heat spikes. The relatively mild summer followed by extended fall sunshine and moderate heat created near-ideal conditions for winemakers to allow their fruit to accumulate flavor complexity with gradual increases in sugar levels. Volume is looking great, up 20-30% increase over average crop quantity.

Harvest Dates: 9-17-18 and 9-19-18

Winemaking: Our winemaking begins in the vineyard with meticulous attention to detail and close monitoring by Bob Biale and winemaker Tres Goetting.

At harvest, the fruit is hand-picked and hand sorted to ensure that only the best fruit makes it into the fermenter. The grapes are then crushed and gravity fed into open top tanks. The must is cold soaked for 2 to 4 days at 50°F. We then inoculate the must with commercial yeast strains. For color and tannin extraction, we do 2 to 3 punch downs per day. Fermentation is usually complete after 14 to 16 days at a maximum temperature of 86°F. At dryness, we lightly press to 100% Burgundy oak barrels of which 25% are new. Malolactic fermentation is completed in the barrels. The wine was aged in barrels for eleven months.

Alcohol: 14.8%

Winemaker's Tasting Notes: This wine has rich aromatics of dark plum, black cherry, papaya, tea leaf and root beer. It has a plush and creamy mouthfeel that blankets the entire palate with viscosity and weight. This is a Zinfandel that is drinking beautifully right out of the gate.

Only 420 cases were produced.