



2022 BLACK CHICKEN
NAPA VALLEY ZINFANDEL

— R O B E R T —
BIALE

V I N E Y A R D S

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It all started in the 1940s when 14-year-old Aldo Biale helped his mother make ends meet by selling to insider Napans – along with eggs and produce – some of the family’s homemade Zinfandel. Over the old “party line” phone system, the code words “a Black Chicken” signified a jug of bootleg wine...and kept nosy neighbors and the authorities from finding out about Aldo’s underground Zinfandel operation! Legally produced since 1999, Black Chicken Zinfandel pays homage to the industrious patriarch of the Biale family and the prominence of Zinfandel in the history of the Napa Valley.

The heart of Black Chicken is sourced from vineyards in the Oak Knoll District, among them the same family vineyard Aldo, Nonna, Bob and the Biale family have farmed since the 1930’s. Additional sources come from our estate vineyard surrounding the winery, from neighboring growers in the Oak Knoll, as well as from other long-standing winegrowing families in the Napa Valley. Black Chicken stands as the quintessential expression of Zinfandel from the Napa Valley.

Vintage Notes: The rainy season started off hopefully with several storms bringing much needed precipitation at the end of 2021. Dry conditions, however, returned in January with minimal rainfall through budbreak in mid-March. Cooler, breezy days during flowering in May caused minor shatter in some early flowering blocks, naturally limiting yield. In June a well-timed ½ inch of rain provided the vines with a much-needed drink. Idyllic growing and ripening conditions persisted through the summer. Moderate heat in the middle of August jump started an early harvest. Picking accelerated ahead of a five-day heat spike that began the first week of September, nearly driving harvest to completion. Harvest at Biale concluded exactly a month after it began, just before an early autumn rain. Concentrated and dense with delicate acidity, the 2022 vintage delivered stunning quality across the board.

Harvest Dates: August 23rd to September 17th

Winemaking: Our winemaking begins in the vineyard with meticulous attention to detail and close monitoring by Bob Biale and winemaker David Natali. Fruit is hand-harvested, sorted in the field, and sorted again at the winery. Destemmed, the grapes are then fermented in open top tanks with punch downs gently carried out two to three times per day. Pressed, the wine undergoes malolactic fermentation in 100% French oak barrels, of which 25% is new. Aged for 16 months in barrel.

Alcohol: 14.8%

Winemaker’s Tasting Notes: Showing the influence of the breezy and fog-laced Oak Knoll District, the wine offers rich, plush fruit, delicate acidity and a structure defined by well-ripened, fine-grained tannins. Layered notes of blackberry preserves, raspberry, violet, cocoa, anise, and cherry wood on the nose. Persistent and full on the palate with flavors of plum, black cherry, baking spices, dried herbs, and pomegranate. An expressive Zinfandel that, with proper cellaring, will continue to improve for the next 5-7 years.