



FROG'S LEAP

2020 VALDIGUIÉ RUTHERFORD



A BRIEF HISTORY

When we began farming and purchasing the grapes from the Rossi Ranch in the 1990s, in addition to blocks of Cabernet, Merlot, and Sauvignon Blanc that fit neatly into our existing wines, there were a handful of historic old-vine blocks still hanging around that forced us to get creative. Much of this was due to Louise Rossi, the owner and guardian spirit of the ranch; one did not simply rip out a block of vines on Louise's time—or dime. Thus, an old stand of Riesling became the inspiration for the Leapfrögmilch, and two parcels of Valdiguié—known invariably as Napa Gamay to old-timers in the valley—became the core of our new rosé program.

After purchasing the ranch in 2007, we began planting various parts of the ranch that were fallow, focusing on Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc; that effort, finally completed in 2020, has enabled the existence of our marquee Estate Cabernet. But we never had the heart to rip out the old blocks; we're just kind of weird that way. Instead, the Riesling found new neighbors with the Mourvèdre and Charbono of the Heritage blend, and the Valdiguié continued to play a role in the Heritage and the rosé—until 2020, when it made its debut as a varietal red wine.

Rossi has two blocks of Valdiguié, one planted in 1954, and the other in 1947. The health of both blocks had declined over the years, and both were assigned to me as my first pruning project upon joining the vineyard team in 2013, with a goal of rebuilding their vigor. After years of effort, the 1947 planting—always the stronger of the two—was the first to make the cut for inclusion in the Heritage blend, and it is the basis for this special bottling. These are the oldest vines we farm at Frog's Leap and are quite simply living symbols of the fun that I have making wine.

ABOUT THE WINE

The Valdiguié was fermented and aged in concrete, with a brief spell in neutral barrel just before bottling. No sulfur was added at crush, and fermentation proceeded on the strength of ambient yeast. The wine received gentle treatment, with punch-downs during primary fermentation and a single racking. The resulting wine is no Cabernet—it's only 11.4% alcohol, after all. But it shows what I have come to love about this grape: bright strawberry and cherry fruits, fresh acidity, and a light astringency on the finish that compels another sip. I love it chilled down, and even though it seems a little cliché, I've got to say it—it's really good with a burger. RW

THE BLEND

100% Valdiguié
100% Rossi Vineyard, Rutherford

VINES

100% certified organic and dry farmed, planted 1947. The lone soil type is the classic gravelly loam of the Pleasanton series. Yep, it's on Cab ground. If we were a different winery, these vines would be Cabernet, and we'd be 85 cases closer to our first helicopter. Alas

STATISTICS

harvested: September 4
harvest chemistry: 19.1° brix, 6.9g/L total acidity, 3.55pH
final chemistry: 11.4% alcohol, 6.3g/L total acidity, 3.45 pH,
0.06% residual sugar
bottled April 21 2021
85 cases produced

WINEMAKERS

John Williams
Rory Williams
Pablo Polanco

VINEYARDIST

Frank Leeds