



FROG'S LEAP

2024  
CHARBONO  
NAPA VALLEY

A BRIEF HISTORY

Of the many varieties of grapes planted across California, there are few as rare as Charbono. Originally from what is now the Savoie region of France, Charbono emigrated to California in the late 19th century but never spread widely, and today only occupies about 80 acres of ground across the whole state. Oddly, nearly half of what is left exists in Napa, largely due to the influence of the Charbono wines produced by Inglenook from the 1950s into the 1980s, whose ability to age have inspired others and rescued the grape from being a mere historical footnote.

In 2007, my dad and I were able to taste a pristine example—the 1964—and that one bottle inspired us in 2008 to plant 2 acres of it at our Rossi vineyard. This wasn't exactly in line with the advice we got from our financial team, but we were dedicated to chasing what we had tasted in the '64: intensity without weight, plummy fruit fully integrated with minty earthiness, and above all the sense of a wine that was completely Napa without conforming to the big-bold Napa red hegemony. That seemed worth going after, and after several years of it finding its way exclusively into the Heritage Blend, I couldn't be happier to be releasing our first varietal Charbono.

ABOUT THE WINE

2024 was an auspicious year for the launch of the Charbono. Perfect ripening conditions and a healthy, balanced crop gave us the best-looking fruit we'd seen in our 16 years of working with the variety. Two tons of the Charbono were selected from the eastern side of the block for this micro-lot fermentation. The grapes were destemmed and crushed to two open-top concrete tanks, with three punch-downs daily over the course of a 10 day fermentation.

After pressing off, the wine was aged in neutral puncheons for 7 months, requiring neither racking, fining nor filtration before being bottled. The '24 is plummy and spicy, brimming with the variety's characteristic mint and pine needle aromas that lend complexity and tension. Charbono wines are deeply colored (its Savoyard name is Corbeau, or "raven"), but its structure and body are nimble and refreshingly drinkable. Will it go 50 years? I'm excited to find out.



BALANCE, RESTRAINT AND DEEP RESPECT FOR THE NATURAL EXPRESSION OF THE VINE



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HOW WE'RE DRINKING IT

Charbono is very flexible. It shines with a roast chicken and some summer squash, which are a perfect match for its lively fruit and piney earthiness, but I've been wowed by Charbono with grilled salmon and tomatoes. Ideal service is in a Pinot-style glass at cool cellar temperature: 59F/15C.

THE BLEND

100% Charbono  
100% Williams-Rossi Vineyard, Rutherford

THE VINES

100% certified organic and dry farmed, planted 2008. The vines are head-trained in the traditional gobelet style and planted in the same Pleasanton gravelly loam that defines many of our Cabernet soils. The grafting material was sourced from Vince Tofanelli's historic and beautifully-farmed vineyard in Calistoga.

STATISTICS

harvested: September 9  
at harvest: 23.3 deg. brix 5.4 g/L total acidity, 3.52 pH  
final: 12.8% alcohol, 5.0 g/L total acidity, 3.76 pH, 0.08% residual sugar  
bottled May 30, 2025  
101 cases produced

WINEMAKERS

John Williams  
Rory Williams  
Pablo Polanco

VINEYARDIST

Frank Leeds



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