



STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS
1998 S.L.V. VINEYARD
CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Vineyard ~ S.L.V., first planted as "Stag's Leap Vineyards" in 1970, now yields even greater depth of fruit than that of the 1973 Cabernet Sauvignon that won the famous 1976 Paris Tasting. Since 1986, we have been applying new viticultural principles to further enhance fruit expression and to promote uniform berry ripeness. Meticulous canopy management gives greater expression to the rich structure and flavor typical of more mature vines. As we replant, the newest viticultural techniques allow us to better match rootstocks, vine spacing and clones to different soils in the vineyard. Human involvement in our estate vineyards has never been higher, for we are farming not only vine-to-vine during the growing season, but as harvest approaches, individual grape clusters are pruned to ensure unvaried fruit maturation. These refinements in human intervention bring out greater expressions of the land's variation, hence we are harvesting the fruit in smaller blocks, which gives us greater flexibility for blending purposes. Located in the heart of Stags Leap District, the overall vineyard conditions are ideal. The soil is volcanic, as well as alluvial, with good drainage and afternoons are warm with cool evening breezes.

Vintage ~ The transition year from El Niño to La Niña was marked by heavy rainfall. A spring that never was evolved into a summer that almost never was, bringing us to a harvest that finally was. Cool spring showers set a moderate crop which was to help in flavor development later on. Aside from one heat spike, the summer was cooler than normal. It was a year that tested winemakers' resolve not to panic in the anticipation of autumn rains. Fruit that had achieved sugar ripeness was left on the vine, allowing for the development of full fruit maturity. Two storm systems gave us little more than a light misting of moisture, leaving unaffected hardier varieties such as Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot. Brilliantly clear days of moderate heat followed, turning berry skins uniformly black with concentrated richness.

Wine ~ *The 1998 S.L.V. presents itself both in aroma and taste like a great and intricate piece of tapestry. In the nose, tendrils of smoke, crushed coriander and green tea embroider a rich fabric of blackberry, dried cherry, earth moistened by a spring rain and hints of lavender. Upon entry, the flavors seem reticent—like shapes in an impressionist painting— but as the wine travels across the palate, beautiful, multidimensional flavors awaken the senses with vivid pictures of tree-ripened black plum. The wine's satiny texture, like warm chocolate, has a firm backbone that resonates through the finish with nuances of cassis, vanilla and clove. Complement this wine with a sumptuous meat such as beef tenderloin or rich creamy dishes like puff pastry filled with goat cheese.*

Harvest Dates ~ October 9-23
Harvest Brix ~ 23.8° (average)
Titratable Acid ~ 0.57g/100ml
pH ~ 3.72
Blend ~ 97.4% Cabernet Sauvignon,
2.6% Merlot

Barrel Aging ~ 21 months French oak
Appellation ~ 100% Napa Valley
Release Date ~ September 1, 2001