



STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS 1999 CASK 23

Vineyards ~ Only in meritorious vintages do we choose the most distinctive grapes from S.L.V. and FAY, our two estate vineyards in the Stags Leap District, and use them to create CASK 23, a proprietary red wine blend expressing exceptional elegance. Although S.L.V. and FAY adjoin each other, the two vineyards experience different growing conditions and produce Cabernet Sauvignon grapes with different flavor characteristics. The volcanic soils of S.L.V., of Paris Tasting fame, yield complex, multi-layered Bordeaux-like fruit elements, while the alluvial soils of FAY produce lush perfumes and berry flavors. Combining the "fire" of S.L.V. and the "water" of FAY can yield a wine of dynamic complexity. Moreover, we have learned that even small blocks within each vineyard produce fruit that tastes subtly but distinctly different from the grapes just a few feet away. As the fruit ripens, we are able to identify which grapes are most distinct, because our grape-growing program focuses on each vine and each cluster. When a vintage yields enough of these small lots of uniquely characteristic fruit, the conditions are right to create a new edition of CASK 23.

Vintage ~ Delayed vine development initiated by a cool spring continued throughout the summer and through the second week of September. Then storm clouds arrived to stir things up a bit. After ominous rolls of thunder, the clouds delivered only a light dusting of rain and then peeled away. Temperatures increased steadily, sometimes breaking the 100° Fahrenheit barrier. As the vine leaves folded away from the sun, they pulled water out of the berries, concentrating sugar and acid – but full flavor had not yet been achieved. Careful maintenance and irrigation nursed the clusters along to physiological ripeness, and acid levels held, supporting fruit and texture. Our vine-by-vine harvesting methods ensured that fruit was picked only when it was completely ready.

Wine ~ *Like a poem whose apparently simple opening lines expand into a kaleidoscopic array of images and ideas, this wine beckons with a soft and elegant nose, then gradually reveals depths of flavor that keep unfolding through the long, tender finish. Aromas of roses and violets rise up in the glass, followed by cassis, plums, and blackberries, opening into clove, cinnamon and even a hint of tobacco. The palate is filled with similar kinds of sensations like black cherry, blackberry, blueberry, and candied orange peel in dark, dark chocolate. Tannins and acidity are there, but only as supporting structure that remains very much in the background. This finely grained, full-bodied wine glides in the mouth on its way to a powerful, clean finish that goes on and on and begs for another taste. Serve with a well-aged steak topped with Béarnaise or a rich cheese-and-mushroom tart in flaky pastry.*

Harvest Dates ~ September 27 - October 25

Harvest Brix ~ 25.1° (weighted average)

Appellation ~ 100% Stags Leap District

Blend ~ 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

Titrateable Acid ~ 0.56g/100ml

Barrel Aging ~ 21 months Nevers oak

pH ~ 3.70

Total Cases ~ 2,347 cases

Release Date ~ September 1, 2002