



PETER FRANUS

Philosophy

I wrote the following sentence many years ago, but it still embodies what I continue to believe. As a winemaker, my greatest satisfaction comes when I see a smile and hear the simple comment, "this is delicious." At first it was a comment I reserved mainly for Zinfandel, but I quickly came to realize it should apply to all wine. For me, wine is a sensual experience, and my goal is to provide as much pleasure as I can.

The Wines

All the great wines I've enjoyed have several features in common—richness, complexity, harmony, and most important, an invitation to come back for more and discover something new with each taste. I personally enjoy wines that are elusive, those that you can't quite put a finger on or explain completely. These thoughts guide my winemaking style. I have a great respect for tradition, and I rely largely on intuition and feelings to guide my decisions. I try to intervene as little as possible in a wine's evolution.

The Vineyards

Distinctive wines come from outstanding grapes that are limited to certain unique sites and microclimates. Grapes from these sources do not require a lot of manipulation and have the greatest potential to produce exciting and memorable wines. I have the good fortune to work with some of the best growers anywhere whose goal is to provide me with the highest quality fruit possible.

Doug Hill's and Jim Fore's Stewart Vineyard in Carneros is my source for Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot. Truchard Vineyards, also in Carneros, provides me with Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Franc, and Cabernet Sauvignon. I get Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel from Rancho Chimiles, and Brandlin Vineyard on Mount Veeder is my single vineyard for old-vine Zinfandel.

The Winery

In 2002, Peter moved his winery production to Laird Family Estate, a Napa custom crush facility that services boutique wineries such as Peter Franus. The winery is not open to the public. Tastings are by appointment only.



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The Winemaker

I grew up in Greenwich, Connecticut and headed west to the University of California at Berkeley where I graduated with a degree in journalism. Berkeley's proximity to Napa Valley was ultimately more significant, and my growing passion about wine led me to enroll in the enology and viticulture program at Cal State Fresno in 1978. I worked at Chalone, Veederhills Vineyard (Hess/William Hill) and Chateau St. Jean before going to Mount Veeder Winery in 1981 where I was winemaker until 1992. At the same time I worked for Franciscan Vineyards from 1989 through 1992. At Mount Veeder I developed a special appreciation of Zinfandel which the winery produced until 1982. It became the inspiration and the opportunity to produce my first wine, a Zinfandel, in 1987.

The Assistant Winemaker

If you're good with accents, you can identify Jeff Keene as a native of New Zealand. For eight years, Jeff worked for a food science lab that did grape and wine research. Intrigued by wine, and a little tired of the fluorescent lights and a white lab coat, he went back to school for a postgraduate degree in enology and viticulture at Lincoln University in New Zealand. After stints at Selaks Winery in Marlborough and Palliser Estates in Martinborough, he came to the US in the late 90s and served as production manager and then winemaker for Havens Wine Cellars. Peter shared the winery with Havens so Jeff also helped in the production of Franus Wines. Fast forward, and as fate would have it, Peter and Jeff are working together again.