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2016 OLD KRAFT VINEYARD ST. HELENA APPELLATION ZINFANDEL

It's a gratifying feeling knowing we helped to save a piece of Napa Valley vineyard history.

Franz Kraft was a prominent winemaker in the earliest days of St. Helena in the period around 1860. His vineyards and winery were on the west side of town on Madrona Avenue. The iconic old native stone winery is now a cellar for the acclaimed Spottswoode Winery and most of the original old vineyards have been replaced – except for an old patch to the north of the winery that is part of the family estate of Bill and Margie Hart.

Instead of tearing out the original Zinfandel and Petite Sirah vines that were planted in the 1890's, Bill and Margie decided to go with the recommendation of vineyard guru Bill Pease who saw potential in the craggy, twisted plants. Bob Biale was brought in to assist and a project ensued to revitalize this rare swath of winemaking history. Bill and Margie agreed to sell all the fruit to Biale with the hope of one day being able to vinify and vineyard-designate this historic wine.

Starting in 2002, drainage, irrigation, soil amendments, pruning, and inter-planting were utilized to bring the vineyard back to productive health, and in 2006 the wine had progressed to the point of being worthy as a new special bottling among the series of Biale Zinfandels. A number of Petite Sirah vines were also part of the vineyard and wine from those grapes has the potential to become a Biale bottling as well.

Vintage Notes: The 2016 growing season was near-perfect with an early start and ideal weather conditions throughout. A relatively steady and mild July and August and then a series of warm days at the end of the growing season, vineyards were able to progress to perfect ripeness. The season wrapped up beautifully as the first significant fall rainstorm arrived on October 14th – just after the last of our grapes were picked.

Harvest Dates: 8/29/2016

Winemaking: The fruit was hand-sorted first in the field then again at the winery. Open-top fermentation and punched down three times per day. Pressed to Burgundian oak – 24% new. Aged 14 months.

Alcohol: 14.6%

Winemaker's Tasting Notes: This is a fragrant wine with hints of tropical fruits, peppermint, orange rind, pomegranate, clove and vanilla bean. The 2016 Old Kraft Zinfandel has a luxurious palate with a silky entry and gentle tannins that build into a lengthy finish.

448 cases were produced.