



Lang & Reed 2000 'Premier Etage' Cabernet Franc – Napa Valley

The words 'Premier Etage' by literal definition mean the 'first floor' or the level above the ground floor. Lang & Reed's interpretive definition means one level up, a deeper profile and more complex expression of the Cabernet Franc grape. The Lang & Reed 2000 'Premier Etage,' composed of 100% Cabernet Franc, is the fifth vintage release and emanates from two very distinct Napa Valley vineyards. The heart of the 'Premier Etage' comes from the Madrigal~Alluvial vineyard, located near Larkmead Lane, half way between St. Helena and Calistoga. The vineyard lies in the middle of the old Richie Creek gravel bed. This source has been the core of 'Premier Etage' since its inception in 1996 and brings to the blend rich, dark chocolate flavors and textural tannins with substance and length.

The other vineyard in the 'Premier Etage' assemblage is from the Wood Ranch [Old Block] in the heart of Rutherford. This vineyard is on an alluvial gravel bed where over the centuries Conn Creek coursed its way back and forth across the valley. The geology of alluvial soils provides for quick drainage and sparse nutrients, allowing the vines to work a little harder during the growing season. The Wood Ranch brings the piazza and showy aromatics, fresh vibrant fruit and luscious mouth feel.

'Premier Etage' rises to the challenges of expressing intense quality of fruit and building complexities from the geology and climate of two vineyards. Each of the two cuvees receives slightly different fermentation regimes best suited to the particular vineyard and the ripeness of the grapes. All the grapes are de-stemmed, but not crushed, allowing the partial, whole-berry fermentation to bring forth the seductive Cabernet Franc perfume, aromas and fruit flavors. Various lengths of post-fermentation maceration are employed before the wine is racked into French oak barrels.

Description

This 'Premier Etage' displays a dried flower and herb perfume mixed with top notes of berry fruit, vanilla and a touch of smoke. The flavors are a combination of the aromatic notes with a typical dark Swiss chocolate impression noted in previous vintages of the 'Premier Etage.' The follow-through is intense as the combination of rich fruit, fine-grain tannin and 'good' wood provides the wine with ample structure and proportion. We always view the 'Premier Etage' to be a 'Vin de Garde', or a wine to age, meaning that with proper cellaring the wine will display additional complexities and nuance.

Varietal Composition	100% Cabernet Franc	Bottling Date	March 2002
Appellation	100% Napa Valley	Case Production	557 Cases (12 x 750mL)
Vineyards	Madrigal~Alluvial Vineyard, St. Helena Wood Ranch, Rutherford		
Alcohol Content	14.16% by Volume		
Acidity	.52 g/100 mL		
pH	3.68		
Cooperage	French Oak Barrels – 20 Months		
Label Design	Jeanne Greco, Caffe Greco Design, New York		

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