



2003 CABERNET SAUVIGNON, “*Crossroads Cuvee*” Central Coast

Winemaker’s Notes:

This is my the second Cabernet Sauvignon to be bottled with a Babcock label, and it stems from my FATHOM program showing me (finally!) that there is good Cabernet Sauvignon in our own winemaking backyard, the Santa Ynez Valley. This new, high quality, local Cab phenomenon has become my motive force, and has compelled me to explore Cabernet Sauvignon more thoroughly. Indeed, it has lured me into almost every nook & cranny of California’s Central Coast, looking for that perfect grape, with an understanding of what makes it tick.

While currently there is a tiny bit of good Cabernet Sauvignon in the interior of the Santa Ynez Valley, there is an ocean of it on the Central Coast. Every agribusiness that felt it was appropriate to cover the planet with grapes, every professional from some other field with cash to burn and the notion that bliss will be obtained once he has a vineyard, and every guy who doesn’t have any cash to burn but still thinks that bliss is somehow to be gleaned out of a process of dirt farming, they have all come to the Central Coast over the last decade and planted Cabernet Sauvignon (well, Syrah too, but that’s another story). The moral of this story is that there is good, well priced Cabernet Sauvignon out there, lots of it. On the one hand, this is a problem. It’s called oversupply. On the other hand, for the winemaker who is willing to scour the crossroads of three different counties, hunting for the best grapes, there are some opportunities.

Ultimately, I am most excited about the fact that we now have great Cabernet Sauvignon and other Bordeaux varieties locally. Going forward, this is what will drive a Babcock Cabernet Sauvignon program. For the time being, I see a strong influence from the Central Coast on this wine, insuring that it will be a great product at a great retail price. When those agribusinesses start to see better returns in broccoli, that’s when the pendulum will swing and the supply will dry up. That’s why I am working now to make all the right connections to the vineyards that are now being established on the crossroads of Santa Ynez; all of which are a lot closer to home.

The wine has an opaque, deep garnet color with a lasting cherry/berry fruit, a dash of chocolate & herbs, and a mild toasty oak character in the nose and on the palate. Food for thought: the December 2005 issue of *Connoisseurs’ Guide to California Wine* rated 147 Cabernet Sauvignons. Interestingly, the average suggested retail price of those wines was \$52.50 a bottle, and even at that, the *Connoisseurs’ Guide* described a full 53% of those wines as, essentially, ordinary (a score of less than 87). As far as the quality of this wine goes, I will let you be the judge. As far as the price goes, we are looking good.

Technical Notes:

VINEYARD SOURCES: The percentages are too complicated to compute. Thank you to the following growers that contributed to this blend in addition to our own estate: Alisos Vineyard, Carriage Vineyard, Estelle Vineyard, Hearthstone Vineyard, Lockwood Oaks Vineyard, Margaret’s Vineyard, Mitchella Vineyard, Vogelzang Vineyard

VARIETAL COMPOSITION: 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Syrah, 8% Cabernet Franc, 2% Merlot

FINISHED WINE: Residual Sugar: Dry, TA: 6.69 g/L, pH: 3.78, Alcohol by Volume 13.7%

TIME IN BARRELS: 16 months, 25% new French Oak

BOTTLING DATE: March, 2005 RELEASE DATE: February, 2006

TOTAL PRODUCTION: 860 cases 750 ML