

2021 Favia CERRO SUR Red Wine Napa Valley

Rancho Chimiles, the classic California ranch high in the mountains east of Coombsville, is the home of the Cabernet Franc at the core of our perennially impressive blended red wine, *Cerro Sur*. These mature vines, in this very special *terroir*, produce a wine of singular character, aromatic enthusiasm, and fresh, focused flavors. After meticulous sorting, the grapes are carefully monitored through fermentation and maceration, giving the wine a fine texture and a narrow focus. This is followed by 22 months of aging in 50% new French oak barrels, and bottling without fining or filtration, which we feel helps to maximize the potential of the wine.

The 2021 Cerro Sur captures the intensity of the vintage. It was the second year in a multi-year drought in California, so the vines produced a limited crop of very expressive fruit. The Cabernet Franc from this high elevation site delivered a wine with strong varietal character, showing notes of licorice, cardamom, Asian market spices, and bright red cherry. Around this core, we blended Cabernet Sauvignon, which adds mid-palate weight and a black fruit density, and Merlot, which brings freshness and roundness. Coming up on two decades of experience making this wine from these old vines, we know the aging trajectory of this wine: it will only continue to become more complex and alluring with time in the bottle.

22 months in barrel, 1 year in bottle. No fining or filtration. French oak, 50% new.
53% Cabernet Franc, 32% Cabernet Sauvignon, 15% Merlot

Vintage Notes and Reviews

The 2021 growing season fell in the middle of a multi-year drought in California. With very little winter and spring rain, the vines worked hard to develop canopies, and in the end set a relatively small crop. Luckily, summer temperatures were relatively mild, with only a couple of days with peak temperatures over 100 degrees Fahrenheit (38C). This meant that the fruit was able to mature slowly, and fruit quality at harvest was balanced and concentrated. In fact, the ample sun exposure of the fruit led to remarkable phenolic development, with the grapes at harvest having very dark color and highly structured tannins.

The harvest arrived relatively early, and at Favia we were harvesting our Oakville fruit beginning on September 7. The mild temperatures allowed us to continue harvesting methodically for over a month, with the last Coombsville Cabernet Sauvignon coming into the winery on October 13. This long harvest gave us a broad spectrum of blending components with which to craft our 2021 wines.

Across the board, the 2021 wines from Favia show great depth, pleasant natural acidity, and strong varietal expression. The vintage shows all the power and richness expected from Napa Valley, and with a tannic backbone that will allow the wines to age for decades to come.

JEB DUNNUCK August 2023 - 98 points

Mostly Cabernet Franc from a higher elevation site in Coombsville (there's 34% Cabernet Sauvignon and 13% Merlot), the 2021 Cerro Sur is a stunningly beautiful wine offering ripe red and black fruits supported by plenty of chocolate, ripe tobacco, and crushed stone-like minerality. It's full-bodied and has remarkable concentration, ripe, building tannins, and a layered, majestic style that would give a top vintage of Cheval Blanc a run for its money. Give this incredible red blend 3-4 years in the cellar, and it will have over two decades of prime drinking.

ANTONIO GALLONI/VINOUS October 2023 - 97 points

The 2021 Cerro Sur is bright, aromatic and beautifully focused right out of the gate. Cabernet Franc drives the profile in this intensely aromatic, layered red. Crushed flowers, sweet red berry fruit, mocha, rose petals and blood orange lend notable vibrancy. The Cerro Sur is the most restrained of the Favia reds, but it has a ton of pure pedigree.

LISA PEROTTI-BROWN/THE WINE INDEPENDENT January 2024 - 97 points

The 2021 Cerro Sur is a blend of 53% Cabernet Franc, 34% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 13% Merlot from Rancho Chimiles Vineyard. Deep garnet-purple in color, it features evocative scents of black raspberries, wild blueberries, and redcurrant preserves leading to hints of pencil shavings, bay leaves, and red roses. The full-bodied palate vibrates with energetic black and red berry layers framed by fine-grained tannins and oodles of freshness, finishing long and perfumed. This is gorgeous!

JAMES SUCKLING December 2023 - 97 points

Black berry, black olive and bark as well as dark fruits. Some mint and crushed stone. Medium to full body, juicy and velvety texture with lovely layering and depth. A brightness and citrus character behind all the earth and fruit notions.

JANE ANSON – Review not yet published

JOE D'ANGELO/INTERNATIONAL WINE REPORT – Review not yet published

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