



2010 Checkerboard Napa Valley Red Wine

The 2010 growing season started out with more rain than in previous years, resulting in a wetter, cooler spring. Bud break was timely and finished well. Our summer temperatures remained relatively moderate throughout the growing season to harvest, allowing for the full ripening of the fruit flavors and development of the tannin maturity. Harvest at Checkerboard began on September 30th and ended on October 22nd. A delightfully compressed three week picking period! The vinification process is carried out with exacting attention to detail. Each of our lots comes from a specific block and receives incredibly site specific care from Winemaker Martha McClellan, to produce a wine that highlights the individual characteristics of the vineyard and the unique site of that lot.

- The 2010 Checkerboard is made from 100% estate grown fruit from the Aurora Vineyard surrounding the winery, located at the 1200 foot elevation.
- All of the wines made at Checkerboard Estate are whole berry fermented from fruit that is hand sorted in the vineyard prior to harvest.
- Depending on the vintage and block, the majority of our fruit is fermented in new French oak 60 gallon barrels from Darnajou & Taransaud. The toast varies somewhat, but is primarily medium plus.
- Additionally, fermentation takes place in both Taransaud tapered oak casks and small tapered stainless steel tanks.
- The individual lots remain in barrel for approximately 26 months before they are blended.
- The wine remains in bottle for 12-14 months more before it is labeled and shipped from our winery.

The wines have a very rich, ripe, red fruit character with underlying power and concentration. The tannins are sweet and velvety and overall showing beautiful balance and finesse. The lengthy finish shows off the multiple layered structure and incredible depth of the wine. The final blend consists of 98% Cabernet Sauvignon (comprised of seven Cabernet clones) with 1% of each Petit Verdot and Merlot. Once again the number of cases is quite small, just short of 250 of the 2010 Checkerboard.