



*Tasting Notes:*

“Plummy blueberry, black cherry and black currant wrap around a softly layered core of toasted oak in this light and delicate take on the oft-hearty variety. Smatterings of vanilla and dark chocolate tease on the finish. 90 points.” – Virginie Boone, *Wine Enthusiast*

*Vineyard:*

As you drive from Calistoga in northern Napa across the county line into Knights Valley, the first vines you see belong to Blau Vineyard. Protected from ocean influences more than other Sonoma County growing regions, the warmer climate, slightly higher elevation, and volcanic soils here combine to create a fertile hunting ground for Bordeaux varietal wines that are savory, mineral-driven, and full of character. Malbec is the focus for the ageless Bill Blau, and is planted on the prime hillside spots to attract sunshine and drain excess moisture.

*Vintage:*

The third straight year of drought triggered much stress for vineyard owners, but generally contributed to fantastic quality wines. A warm dry winter caused the vines to start their annual life cycle ahead of schedule, but aside from some wind, the spring was free of major weather. All the grape varieties seemed to ripen at once, and the pace in the winery at crush was hectic, but luckily the cooler than normal August brought us an average size crop of ripe grapes with beautifully balanced acids.

*Winemaking:*

Our Malbec from Blau Vineyard was destemmed into one open-top tank, and was concentrated via a small saignée before it cold-soaked for several days. Fermentation started spontaneously with wild yeast and the must was punched down manually twice per day for two weeks followed by pressing and racking into barrel. The wine aged for 16 months in French oak barrels, 33% of which were new, and was racked only once, immediately prior to bottling.

*Food Pairings:*

If it grows with it goes with: we love this wine with a traditional French cassoulet with duck confit or a skirt steak with Argentine chimichurri.