



2005 NEGRETTE Caleri Vineyard

Appellation: San Benito County

pH: 3.71

Alcohol by volume: 14.24 %

T.A.: 0.65 g / 100 mL

R.S.: 0.051 %

Malic Acid: 0.06 mg / 100mL

Produced and Bottled by:

Kenneth Volk Vineyards

www.volkwines.com

In 1997 the BATF ruling on varietal name labeling mandated that the Pinot St. George name, previously used in California, be discontinued and replaced with its French name, Negrette. The Negrette variety has been the principal red grape of Cotes du Frontonnais V.D.Q.S. since the 12th Century. Specifically, it is planted in southwestern France, north of the city of Toulouse, in the villages of Fronton and Villaudic.

Negrette has been grown in California since prior to prohibition. Traditionally, Negrette has been used in red wine blends, and was more common prior to the 75% varietal labeling requirement (mandated in 1986 by the BATF).

The Negrette bud wood for the Caleri Vineyard was rescued from the historic El Gavilan Vineyard of the Cienega Valley prior to its' bulldozing by new owners. These vines were replanted in the Caleri Vineyard, which is located near the town of Tres Piños along the banks of the San Benito River near the town of Hollister. This vineyard is owned and farmed by legendary vintner, Ron Siletto. The vines of this three acre planting are grown on their own roots and trained to a modified Geneva Double Curtain trellis.

The Negrette grape is an extremely thin-skinned, small-berried, small-clustered variety that bears physiological similarities to Pinot Noir. The variety is extremely susceptible to botrytis bunch rot and is negatively affected by rain and high humidity near harvest time. Thus, it is very difficult to grow quality Negrette. This demanding, unaccommodating, and dare we say prissy vine plant produces wines of extremely deep pigment. These two factors undoubtedly lead to the grape's politically incorrect yet strangely charming French handle of "little black bitch" (direct translation).

Fruit for this bottling was hand-harvested and field-sorted prior to delivery to the winery in a refrigerated truck trailer. The grapes were crushed and destemmed with layerings of dry ice into one and one-half ton open top bins. This wine was fermented with indigenous yeast and the cap was managed by frequent hand punchdowns.

Pressing occurred at cap-fall and the wine was immediately barreled into Burgundian French oak cooperage, of which 35% was new. We bottled in August 2006 after nine months of cellaring. Negrette is somewhat difficult; it is difficult to grow, difficult to make, and difficult to describe. . it shares attributes of both Pinot Noir and Syrah. Our 2005 vintage is deeply pigmented, but light bodied. It has aromas of currant, plum, spice and leather, and on the palate it has a creamy texture with flavors of strawberry and cranberry, a sensual gaminess and soft tannins.