

## History

When Francis and Eleanor Coppola purchased the majority of the historic Niebaum Estate in 1975, they focused on producing one great wine, Rubicon, a Bordeaux-style red. Rubicon, a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Cabernet Franc, is aged exclusively in small French oak barrels. In 1995, the Coppolas re-united the Inglenook Estate by purchasing the front portion of the property and the Chateau. To pay homage to Inglenook and to John Daniel, the first vintage of Cask Cabernet was created in 1995. It celebrated the re-unification of the great estate and the people whose hard work and commitment built the legend.

Rutherford is the perfect place for production of Cabernet Sauvignon and the variety has a long and illustrious history on the land. The rich alluvial soils impart a fine character and produce wine with unique flavors that reveal a richness, structure and complexity, as distinctive as it is rare. The Niebaum clone of Cabernet was first planted on our estate in early 1882 and is credited with producing the legendary Inglenook Cask wines of the late 1940's, 50's and 60's.

## Vineyard Notes

Over the past decade, Niebaum-Coppola and the University of California at Davis have cooperated in an effort to 'rescue' the original Niebaum Cabernet Clone. Through a series of plant propagations using new technology, a new vine, free of virus and other harmful vine pathogens, was created. The University's work has been outstanding. The Niebaum clone of Cabernet Sauvignon is now registered at the University as clone #29 and ten thousand of these new vines were planted in 2000. On the Niebaum-Coppola Estate, there are over 200 acres of vineyards, of which nearly 100 are dedicated to growing ultra-premium Cabernet Sauvignon.

Cask is one hundred percent estate-grown Cabernet Sauvignon harvested from the Gio Vineyard, the Cask Vineyard, the Lower Cask Vineyard and the Walnut Vineyard. The Gio Vineyard planted to the Niebaum Clone is located in the southern section of the Estate between the Chateau and the historic Niebaum Victorian mansion. Also planted to the Niebaum clone, the Cask and Lower Cask vineyards are younger and situated to the north of the Chateau. In close proximity is the Walnut Vineyard planted to Cabernet Sauvignon Clone #7 on 110R rootstock.



## Vintage Notes

1998 was the most tumultuous year in recent memory. It was the 'El Nino' year of California and Rutherford received almost twice the average annual rainfall. A cold, wet winter and spring gave way to a very warm and dry summer that continued well into the fall. Because of the late start from the chilly spring, bud break was delayed at the start of the season and harvest came late, ending the first week of November.

## Winemaking Notes

Cabernet lots for Cask are fermented differently than a block of Cabernet for Rubicon. For Cask, we look for the delicious, forward, bold flavors of big Cabernet. We extract as much color and big red cherry flavor as possible out of the grapes in a relatively short period. We pump-over the must as much as six times a day for the first four days of fermentation and then reduce the number of pump-overs as the temperatures and alcohol climb. Before the must is 'dry' we press by day six. This method of a shorter, more aggressive fermentation combined with large oak barrel aging yields wines of great power and zest with more of the traditional forward Rutherford fruit.

After much experimentation, we chose the 500-liter puncheon to be the most suitable for Cask. The size of the puncheon is directly related to how long a wine can stay in barrel as well as how much new oak will be imparted to the new wine. We have found that we can use 70% new and 30% one-year-old American oak puncheons for 24 months and create the desired integration of fruit and oak. The matrix of these three essential elements: time in barrel, amount of new wood, and amount of wood character on the wine, are delicately interwoven.

## Tasting Notes

The 1998 Cask Cabernet has aromas of big red and black cherries, almost sweet, with engaging maple and vanilla notes from the American oak. The palate is full-bodied, very round and immediately rewarding with dense, racy red and blue fruits. The finish is almost viscous and obviously age-worthy, and most of all, delicious.

~Scott McLeod, Winemaker

### WINEMAKING ANALYSIS:

### 1998 Cask Cabernet

*Niebaum-Coppola*

<i>Appellation:</i> Rutherford Estate, Napa Valley		<i>Blend:</i> 100% Cabernet Sauvignon	<i>Alcohol:</i> 14.1% by volume
<i>Total Acid:</i> .59 gm/100 mL	<i>pH:</i> 3.66	<i>Barrel Type:</i> 100% American oak puncheons	<i>Barrel Aging:</i> 24 Months
<i>Case Production:</i> 6244 6-pack cases		<i>Bottle Date:</i> October 2000	<i>Released:</i> September 1, 2001