

Rubicon reflects the richness and the ripeness of the Niebaum~Coppola Estate. The deep ruby red hue of this wine is a result of the perfect ripening of the Cabernet Sauvignon blended with Merlot for extra flavor dimension and Cabernet Franc to lift and intensify aromatics. Rubicon is not made to reflect any one varietal. Instead it is a representation of the renowned property from which it comes.

The Cabernet Sauvignon grapes in the 1996 Rubicon are based on the Cabernet clone imported by founder Gustave Niebaum over a century ago. When grown on the soils of the Rutherford Bench, the Niebaum clone has a distinctive style, one that has become the trademark of the Niebaum~Coppola Rubicon.

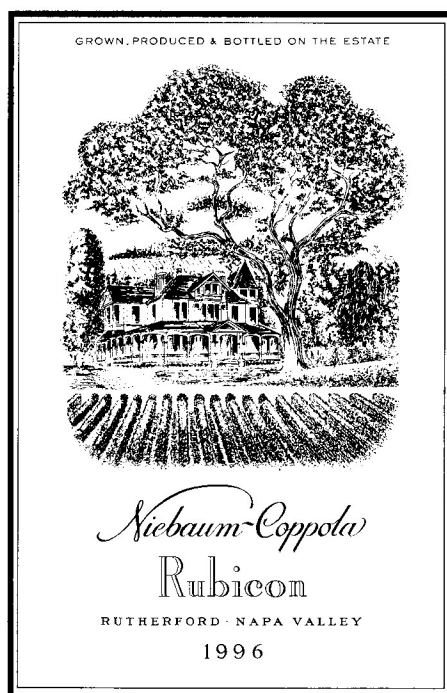
The decade of the 1990's fails to disappoint. Following the sensational 1995 harvest, it appears that the wines of the '90's may be the greatest decade ever for the Napa Valley. The growing season of 1996 was very dry, with below average rainfall and an early budbreak caused by low soil moisture conditions. As the season began early, it ended earlier than the previous two vintages with a gorgeous warm and sunny September harvest. By November, it was with much excitement that the harvest of 1996 would rank among the decade's greats.

Winemaker's Notes:

The experience of tasting Rubicon begins with its visual beauty of its dense, saturated ruby-purple color that is nearly opaque. Always a sign of ripeness and concentration, the color of Rubicon is powerful and dark and tells of the structure and seriousness of the wine. The aroma of the 1996 Rubicon is the classic estate Cabernet Sauvignon character of black cherries and violets. Though aged in 60% new French oak barrels, the contribution of the wood is amazingly integrated and supports the fruit aromas rather than masking them. On the palate, the

1996 RUBICON

Rutherford, California



sweet core of red cherries and dark raspberries is the property icon and a character found in all vintages of Rubicon. The lengthy finish is true to the late September harvest which produced impressive, powerful tannins that will soften with time in the bottle.

Vineyard Notes:

The 1996 Rubicon, as all Rubicons, begins with the cornerstone block of Cabernet Sauvignon from the Garden vineyard. This vineyard was planted in 1965 on St. George Rootstock and to the original Niebaum clone of Cabernet that founder Gustave Niebaum brought over in 1882. It is an amazing Cabernet vineyard that contributes the truly identifiable black cherry and violet perfume to Rubicon. It is beyond dense, nearly opaque, and supremely concentrated. By itself, it is almost too powerful. As the foundation of Rubicon, it is perfection.

The harvest of 1996 represents the lowest yields on the property in one hundred years. After replanting over half of the estate due to inevitable concerns like virus and old age, the estate was down to its foundation blocks of old Cabernet, the Garden and the Gio vineyard, for the 1996 harvest. The 12 acre Gio vineyard, planted in 1988, is consistently a major contributor to Rubicon with its sweet red fruit aroma and flavor. This vineyard is all about charm and it balances out the raw power of the Garden vineyard beautifully.

— Scott McLeod, Winemaker

WINEMAKING ANALYSIS: 1996 Rubicon				Niebaum-Coppola	
Vineyard: Niebaum-Coppola Estate		Blend: 89% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Franc			
Alcohol: 14.1% by volume	Total Acid: .58 gm/100 ml	pH: 3.66	Barrel Regimen: 26 months new French Oak		
Case Production: 2989		Bottled: February, 1999		Released: March 15, 2000	