

Rubicon is not made to reflect any one varietal. Instead, it is a representation of the renowned property from which it comes and 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 Cabernet Sauvignon blended with Merlot for extra flavor dimension and Cabernet Franc to lift and intensify aromatics.

The Cabernet Sauvignon grapes in the 1997 Rubicon originate from 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.

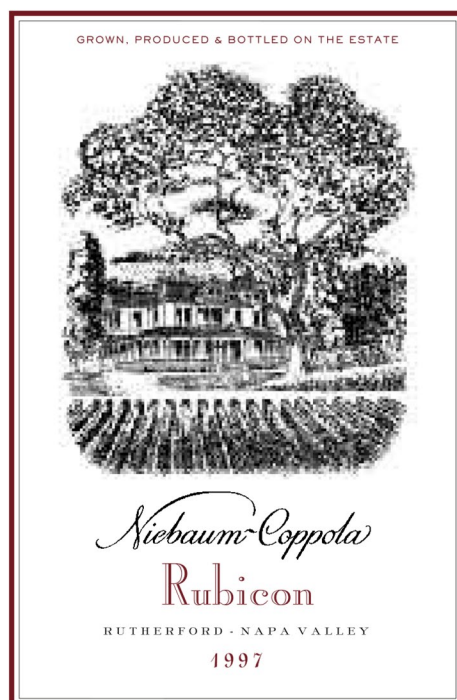
The decade of the 1990's may prove to be the best Napa Valley has ever experienced and, arguably, 1997 may be the best single vintage year. The growing season of 1997 was gorgeous with a beautiful mild summer and a warm, sunny fall. The first Cabernets to arrive into Napa wineries were dark and concentrated. By early October, it was apparent that 1997 was going to be an amazing year, not only for Cabernet, but also for Merlot, Zinfandel, and Chardonnay.

Vineyard Notes:

The 1997 Rubicon, as do 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. It is an amazing vineyard that contributes the truly identifiable black cherry and violet perfume unique 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. Unlike the low yields of the 1996 harvest, 1997 was one of the largest in the Napa Valley and in California. The 1997 vintage represents the potential of what is truly Rubicon.

1997 RUBICON

Rutherford, California



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 1997 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.

Winemaker's Notes:

The 1997 Rubicon is impressive at first glance. It is nearly opaque, with saturated ruby-purple color, like all Rubicons. Color this dark signals a very ripe year where the vines worked continually up to the hour of harvest, packing as much color and flavor and sugar into the grapes as possible. The aroma of the 1997 Rubicon is classic Estate Cabernet Sauvignon with the character of black cherries and violets. Though aged in 75% 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 concentrations of the 1997 harvest are best described as a viscous, sweet black cherry flavor and a dark chocolate and rum raisin note. The lengthy finish is true to the late September harvest, which produced impressive, powerful tannins that will soften with time in the bottle. What is so impressive about great vintages is their early appeal for their fresh charm and forward fruit, but also the rewards of patience an additional ten to fifteen years of bottle age can bring.

— Scott McLeod, Winemaker

WINEMAKING ANALYSIS: 1997 Rubicon			<i>Niebaum-Coppola</i>		
<i>Vineyard:</i> Niebaum-Coppola Estate		<i>Blend:</i> 92% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Merlot, 3% Cabernet Franc			
<i>Alcohol:</i> 14.1% by volume	<i>Total Acid:</i> .58 gm/100 ml	<i>pH:</i> 3.63	<i>Barrel Regimen:</i> 26 months new French Oak		
<i>Case Production:</i> 6070 (6 btl. cases)		<i>Bottled:</i> February, 2000		<i>Released:</i> March 15, 2001	

NIEBAUM~COPPOLA, ESTATE, VINEYARDS & WINERY

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