

## Stepping Stone by Cornerstone 2011 Cabernet Franc Napa Valley



Cabernet Franc; a cantankerous variety, often blended with other Bordeaux reds, is a late ripener, preferring cooler climates which makes ripening this variety to perfection a challenge. However, find the right locations and something very special emerges.

Sourced from four outstanding vineyard sites, each adds a unique personality to the wine. Balanced with the structure and mid-palate richness from our Oakville Merlot for harmony, our Stepping Stone by Cornerstone 2011 Cabernet Franc Napa Valley is a beautiful example of this variety and showcases how spectacular Cabernet Franc can be from the Napa Valley.

Elegance and balance best describes the wines from 2011. Numerous challenges were provided to viticulturists and winemakers throughout the 2011 vintage. Mother Nature was throwing curve balls at us left and right.

What began with a wet winter and spring continued with rainfall into June that delayed bloom and disrupted fruit set. The mild, steady warmth of the summer months lacked any significant temperature spikes allowing the fruit to ripen slowly, but uniformly with fantastic flavor development. Unusually cool and wet weather returned September and October pushing the vintage even later, but we were rewarded in the end with weeks of amazing weather that provided needed ripening time. The commitment to quality runs deep in this valley so with our patience and the precision farming of our fantastic growers we were rewarded once again with elegant, well balanced wines.

Our Stepping Stone by Cornerstone 2011 Cabernet Franc Napa Valley opens with alluring aromatics displaying lifted red berry, lavender and sweet basil notes with a touch of dried herbs, tobacco leaf and barrel spice playfully effusing from the glass. Beautifully balanced and supple, the palate is filled with bright flavors of red cherry and raspberry. Ripe tannins, round and plush flow through and grow with energy through a long and expansive palate with tobacco, herb and floral notes lingering on the finish. A pretty wine with plenty of textural elegance and finesse, its vibrant character makes for early enjoyment, but the rich structure and natural acidity will allow this wine to evolve beautifully with age.

Composition: 89% Cabernet Franc: Talcott Vineyard, St. Helena, Oakville Station, Truchard Vineyard, Carneros, Carrefour Vineyard, Coombsville Appellation - 11% Merlot Oakville Station

Harvest: Each of the vineyards was harvested early to late October, 2011 in perfect conditions

Aging: 18 months in French Bordeaux oak barrels 50% new Bottling Date: May 14th., 2013 Cases Produced: 1012 cases, Bottling Analysis: Alcohol 14.5 % v/v, pH 3.64, T.A. 0.550 g/100mL