

Heitz Cellar

Napa Valley Vineyards

Farming for the Future

From the beginning, Heitz Cellar aimed to identify and acquire the finest vineyard land in the Napa Valley—and then become stewards of these rarified properties. With a recent 51-acre addition by the Lawrence family, Heitz has curated a collection of 1,151 acres in their care; only 476 of these acres are planted.

The winery's diverse agricultural operation now encompasses vineyards in six of Napa Valley's appellations. This affords the winemaker many opportunities for experimentation and the latitude to convey the remarkable breadth of terroirs and niche climates that make the Napa Valley one of the world's finest winegrowing destinations.

On these enviable properties, Heitz Cellar practices sustainable and certified organic farming in order to preserve its rich agricultural heritage and contribute to a healthy future for everyone who calls the Napa Valley home.

Martha's Vineyard, Oakville, Napa Valley

Arguably the most famous vineyard in the Heitz Cellar portfolio, Martha's Vineyard is owned by the May family. Tom and Martha May purchased this property in 1963, and a handshake deal with Joe Heitz in 1965 ensured that Heitz Cellar would have exclusive access to this special fruit for the next five decades and beyond.

Martha's Vineyard is 34 gently sloping acres on the western side of the Napa Valley just south of Oakville. This verdant niche near the Mayacamas foothills soaks up the morning sun and then cools down a bit earlier than the valley floor. Fanning out across a graveled alluvial plain, the vines flourish in this unique microclimate allowing for the true characteristics of the site to come through in the complexity of the wine.

One of Napa Valley's earliest organically farmed vineyards, this certified organic ranch is home to a proprietary Cabernet clone famed for producing small berries with an intensely purple hue, a splendidly concentrated flavor, and just a touch of mint. It was this exquisite Martha's Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon fruit that gave Joe Heitz the idea to craft the Napa Valley's first vineyard-designated Cabernet Sauvignon in 1966.

Trailside Vineyard, Rutherford, Napa Valley

Framed by native oaks and two graceful palm trees, the idyllic Heitz Trailside Vineyard is a fertile belt of gravelly, well-drained soil that stretches out on the eastern side of the Rutherford AVA, where the trellised plants can soak up the radiant afternoon sunshine.

Hugging the Silverado Trail on its east side and descending at a grade of roughly 2% until its opposite boundary reaches the banks of Conn Creek, the Trailside Vineyard offers ideal conditions. “The alluvial soil combined with a gradual slope towards Conn Creek makes this site ‘textbook perfect’ for growing Cabernet Sauvignon,” says Winemaker Brittany Sherwood. “We have planted the vines in an east-west orientation to evenly ripen the fruit throughout the day with dappled, gentle sunlight, resulting in small berries and ultimately, a smooth and concentrated wine.”

The Heitz family originally sourced grapes grown on this prime slice of land in the early 1980s. They acquired the vineyard in 1984, believing it had great potential to establish a powerful identity of its own. The vineyard’s 85 planted acres (of 105 total) are divided into 16 blocks, with eight soil types and seven different clones of Cabernet Sauvignon. The first single-vineyard Trailside Cabernet Sauvignon was produced in 1989, from the vineyard’s best blocks.

Ever since the Heitz family’s original purchase of Trailside Vineyard, the long-range goal was to extend its borders to encompass the gently sloping section of alluvial fan that geographically is one large piece of land. In June 2019 the opportunity arose to annex a parcel comprised of 51 acres planted to Cabernet Sauvignon and Sauvignon Blanc. Trailside Vineyard is now joined together with the remaining part of its outstanding bench land and undergoing the process of converting to the Heitz vineyard farming practices, taking the necessary steps to achieve certified organic and biodynamic farming status.

Linda Falls Vineyard, Howell Mountain, Napa Valley

In 2002, we planted cabernet sauvignon vines on Howell Mountain near the gateway to the picturesque Linda Falls Preserve. Stretching above the fog at an average elevation of 1,500 feet, this small seven-acre site is known for well-drained, volcanic soils and a cooler climate which results in longer hangtime. Comprised of only two blocks planted with a single clone of cabernet sauvignon, the vines are organized in narrow rows, deliberately positioned to capture the strongest rays of the summer sun. As the fruit matures, the dense spacing and abundant sunshine leads to a low yield of smaller berries with thick, deeply hued skins.

This picturesque, hilly vineyard is surrounded by pine trees, deer, and bears; a truly special slice of Napa Valley. Along with the beauty afforded to this vineyard tucked into the surrounding redwoods, countless hikers and bird watchers have benefited from the easement from Howell Mountain Road to experience the splendor of Linda Falls Preserve.

Ink Grade Vineyard, Napa Valley

Ink Grade was first planted to vines in the 1890s, but it wasn’t until 1989 that Heitz acquired this extraordinary 745-acre property. It is home to an astounding diversity of plant and animal life—groves of redwood trees create a “coastal effect” on the vines, and the animal population is nurtured by natural springs that flow year-round.

The vineyard encompasses elevations ranging from 750 to 2100 feet, one of the highest points in the Howell Mountain AVA. Vines sweep across the ridges in a picturesque tapestry

meticulously designed to develop the myriad of soils and microclimates in this magical place, while preserving 500 acres of natural habitat and wilderness corridors. This is an ideal location for Cabernet Sauvignon, and the grapes for Heitz Cellar's single-vineyard Zinfandel and the Sauvignon Blanc also thrive here.

Production levels throughout the Ink Grade Vineyard are limited by its distinctive series of volcanic soils. The vines are naturally stressed in these soils as the grapes mature, resulting in loose clusters of fruit with small berries that are usually half the weight of those on the valley floor. The red grapes display an intensely deep purple hue, and they are well structured with spicy notes and round ripe tannins.