



FROG'S LEAP

2023 RIESLING

NAPA VALLEY

A BRIEF HISTORY

In 1995, Frog's Leap was introduced to siblings Louise and Ray Rossi, caretakers of the historic Rossi ranch on the northern end of Rutherford's famous western benchlands. Over time, Frog's Leap came to farm all the grapes on this beautiful ranch and purchase all its fruit. In the main, the vineyard consisted of varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon, Sauvignon Blanc and Merlot, which all had obvious destinations in our portfolio of wines. However, the property also held vines with destinations that were...less obvious. Riesling, planted in 1978, certainly fit this bill. We well knew that efforts to convince Ray or Louise to re-plant these blocks were completely futile, so we had to get creative. For a few years, the grapes became "Leapfrögmilch"—an irreverent take on picnic-ready German whites. We let it hang late a few times and dubbed it "Frögenbeerenauslese"—one of the very few sweet wines that Frog's Leap has ever made. They were not especially profitable wines. When Frog's Leap purchased the Rossi ranch in 2007, all logic pointed to a swift end for the Riesling, which sits on ground well-suited to Cabernet Sauvignon.

What we hadn't counted on was falling in love with these vines. Gnarly, twisted, and impossible to farm efficiently, they embody the spirit of experimentation and diversity in California winemaking, thumbing their nose at the hegemony of so-called optimal decision-making in Napa. In the mid-2010s I experimented with making a (relatively) serious dry white wine from these vines and loved the results, and the beauty and strangeness of this block became the inspiration for the Heritage Blend (where a bit of Riesling sometimes makes an appearance). Since 2021 Frog's Leap has made the Riesling as small lot—our smallest-production wine, and one of the great joys of harvest every year.

ABOUT THE WINE

The long, cool harvest of 2023 wonderfully preserved the freshness of the Riesling grapes while allowing for the proper development of the "diesel" aromas which become Riesling's calling card as it ages. Harvested on the same day as the other "heritage" grapes at Rossi, the Riesling was held separate and on skins for a short time before being pressed whole-cluster. Fermentation was in a single, neutral 500L oak puncheon that we designated specifically for this wine. The wine was held on its lees in this puncheon for 11 months before being bottled just before harvest. Green apple, just-ripe white peach, lemon peel and floral notes sit in the foreground on the nose, but there is a background of phenolic, mineral savoriness that charts the future course for this wine. Savory flavors and a tension to the texture dominates the bone-dry palate, which has great presence now but will build in richness over time. —RW



THE BLEND

100% Riesling, Williams Rossi Vineyard
Planted 1978 in the gravelly loam
of the Pleasanton series.

THE VINES

Dry-farmed and certified 100% organic.

WINEMAKERS

John Williams
Rory Williams
Pablo Polanco

STATISTICS

harvested: September 22, 2023
harvest chemistry: 21.9 deg. Brix, 5.4 g/L TA, 3.29 pH
final chemistry: 12.3% alc., 5.4 g/L TA,
3.31 pH, 0.04% RS
bottled: August 9, 2024
49 cases produced

VINEYARDIST

Frank Leeds

BALANCE, RESTRAINT AND DEEP RESPECT FOR THE NATURAL EXPRESSION OF THE VINE