

100% Cabernet with 100% Passion and Integrity ~ Truchard Vineyards



Greetings, Kitten fans! We stumbled upon a wonderful story this past week from one of our favorite wineries, [Truchard Vineyards](#), located in Napa's Carneros region. *[You may recall we've written about them once [before](#).]* We discovered Truchard years ago when we ordered a glass of their Syrah at a local restaurant. We loved the layers of full-bodied, dark fruit, deftly balanced with just the right amount of tannins and spice. Based on that glass of wine, we later visited them, became wine club members, and are now devoted and passionate fans of theirs. They make a whopping 11 different wines, all of which are lovely to sip. It's no small feat to achieve that level of consistent high quality across so many varieties.

The story the winery shared is the tale of a happy accident that led to a great discovery. We adore twists of fate and "mistakes" that turn into unexpected successes, and thought you might, too. So here's the their tale, told in their very words:

Sometimes the best things in the world happen without a plan, serendipitously; perhaps it is fate that brings this greatness to the forefront.

And so begins the unbelievable story of our family's Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon. As longtime Truchard wine club members know, we have been making this wine for the past 18 years, but many people who enjoy it are unaware of how we discovered this special block of grapes on our property.

During the hectic harvest of 1993, a beautiful, sunny September Sunday morning greeted us. Tony Truchard took advantage of the great weather to meet with a winemaker and show him a block of grapes that was to be picked later that week. Earlier that morning, he had met with the harvest crew and instructed them to pick 10 rows of Chardonnay on a west facing hill. The harvest crew nodded and parted ways with Tony.



Tony walked through the vineyards with his colleague throughout the morning. As they meandered through the vines making their way to where the chardonnay was, he looked up in the direction of the harvest crew and froze in shock – the team was picking the wrong block of grapes! From afar, he could see the gondola (an old term for a trailer hauling grapes) full of RED grapes, not the chardonnay meant to be picked that day. Tony sprinted to his pickup truck and sped through the vineyards – a big no-no if you know Tony!

He finally arrived to the site and jumped out of the truck and yelled, “STOP, STOP PICKING!” The colorblind crew froze and stopped in its tracks, but two tons of not quite ripe Cabernet Sauvignon had already been picked.

With brix at 22 degrees and the difficulties of getting a hold of someone on a Sunday afternoon, Tony nonetheless tried to find a home for these grapes. The winery that had been buying this block of grapes for years insisted they were not ripe enough for them, and regardless, they didn’t have staff on Sunday to receive the fruit. It was the same story with everyone else Tony called that day – nobody wanted this fruit.

With unripe and unwanted grapes, and a small window in which to crush them, Tony turned to his own winemaker (who was enjoying a rare respite during harvest) in order to turn these two tons of grapes into wine. When fermentation was complete, much to the surprise of everyone, the results of this accidentally harvested Cabernet Sauvignon turned out to be one of the best lots of the year. In retrospect, this outcome shouldn’t have been surprising, since the source of these wonderful grapes came from a very steep west facing slope that basks in the afternoon sun, which fully ripens the cabernet.

Soon Tony was on the phone again, this time not trying to find a home for the grapes, but to inform the past purchaser that they were not going to be for sale next year. We had mistakenly identified the best lot of Cabernet on our property and we were not going to let this opportunity escape. Imagine what we could make if we let these grapes reach full ripeness, which is exactly what we did the following year.

In 1994, again this lot made the best wine, and it simply could not go unnoticed. We selected the top four barrels and created our first reserve bottling, a tradition that has continued ever since. 100% Cabernet Sauvignon made with 100% Passion and Integrity.

Call it a blessing in disguise, serendipitous moment, or fortuitous encounter – whatever the name, we raise a glass to the crew that harvested happenstance that day!

So this week at The Kitten, we toast to blessings in disguise, to thinking on your feet, and to seeing opportunities that might be hidden in a seeming mistake. We have a feeling this is what happens when you work with “100% Passion and Integrity.” Cheer to all!