

2018 Helios Sunbasket Vineyard Cabernet Franc



The long, cool ripening season of 2018 yielded the darkest, inkiest vintage in my memory. With perfect weather at flowering, we had a bumper crop of deliciousness, making everyone happy.

Typical of the 2018 vintage, this wine is wildly complex with a pretty perfume of rose petals and violets. Flavors meld black pepper, dried black cherries, cassis, raspberries, dried cranberries, white blossoms, and baking spices including cloves and nutmeg. Chocolate, licorice, green olives and fig notes add interest while hints of dried herbs, including thyme, chime in. Minerality lifts everything.

~ Cathy Corison



95 The 2018 Cabernet Franc Sunbasket Vineyard is effusive and so expressive. Crushed flowers, red berry fruit, mocha, spice and rose petal all race out of the glass. The Franc has a bit more brightness and less opulence than the Cabernet Sauvignon off this site, which Cathy Corison bottles under her own label, but the personality of the vineyard is really front and center.

Jan 2021

vinography

The Soul of Refinement: Recent & Upcoming Releases from Corison Winery, Napa

Medium to dark garnet in the glass, this wine smells of dusty earth, black plum, and black cherry. In the mouth, incredibly juicy flavors of black plum (and) cherry... with fantastic, mouthwatering acidity. Faint tannins and hints of dried herbs and flowers add texture and complexity to this wine. This is young and quite primary at the moment but will blossom even more with time. 13.5% alcohol.

Score: around 9.5.

Alder Yarrow, *vinography.com*, August 25, 2021

Jancis Robinson

17.5 Mid crimson. So complex and savoury with a grown-up freshness on the finish. So unlike the Napa Valley stereotype! Brilliantly appetising. Fully ripe but not sweet. Great! None of the leafiness of some Loire Cabernet Francs. Very long and tender.

JR, 29 Oct, 2021

JAMES SUCKLING.COM

94 A really pretty cabernet franc with currant, black cherry and mint. Medium-bodied with firm tannins and a pretty finish. Linear and very fine. Fresh and very pretty. Drink or hold.

January 27, 2021

JEB DUNNUCK

94 The 2018 Cabernet Franc Helios Sunbasket Vineyard offers a beautiful bouquet of redcurrants, black cherries, loamy earth, dried tobacco, and a floral-like character to go with a medium to full-bodied, elegant, seamless style on the palate. I love its mid-palate depth, its tannins are polished, and it has terrific overall balance as well as outstanding length. This is another classic wine from this estate with loads to love. It's going to evolve for 10-15 years with no issues.

jebdunnuck.com, 1/27/21

purely domestic wine report

94 The nose is herb and black plum with underlying cocoa, raspberry, graphite and olive tapenade. The palate entry is lean red fruit with a polished, silky core of herb and tobacco finishing with delicate raspberry and crushed blackberry.

Doug Wilder, *Volume 9.1*

WINE ENTHUSIAST

94 Bursting in bright acidity and polished tannin, this 100% varietal wine is floral and earthy, with salty oak and juicy blue fruit at its core. Elegant and balanced, with tension throughout, it shines in lasting notes of cranberry, currant and lavender.

Virginie Boone, *December 1, 2021*



★★★★★ Wonderful Cabernet Franc, the 2018 is a stylish, well balanced, moderately rich wine, with fine flavor (black cherry, black currant, rose petal, toasty oak, tobacco, herbs), crisp acidity, and a very long, harmonious finish... One of California's best versions of the varietal.

Ronn Wiegand, July 2022, Issues 200-203



93 – Dark purplish ruby color; attractive, fragrant, floral, herbal, bright cherry and red berry fruit aroma with hints of dried herbs, graphite, rose petal, and mocha; rich, red and dark berry fruit flavors with bright acidity. Its balance and richness make the wine enjoyable to taste now, but best to bottle age for another three to five years. **Very highly recommended.**

Nick Ponomareff, Issue 47, June 2021



☀ Standing well apart from Cabernet Francs that aim for high ripeness and extract, the latest Helios bottling very much embraces the polish and refinement that are the signature traits of its maker. It is medium-bodied and finely balanced with gentle tannins for firmness, and... it earns easy endorsement for its insistent focus and its excellent length. Analogies to claret are apt here, and, if a bit lighter and less potent than most Cabernet Francs, it is a genuinely elegant take on the grape and will age beautifully for a good half-dozen or more years.

October 2021



93 Cathy Corison tends a few rows of cabernet franc at a vineyard she recently purchased just north of her Kronos estate, on the west side of Highway 29. Her farming and harvest decisions took this vintage toward cool woodland spice and foresty sour-cherry flavors, a feat on the benchlands of St. Helena. There's textural refinement in the tannins, directing the wine's flavors with clarity and grace. Lasting with quiet intensity, this will be fascinating to follow as it ages over the next ten years.

Joshua Greene (12/21)

VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

93+ Cathy Corison makes such beautiful cabernet franc from her Sunbasket Vineyard. The 2018 Helios comes in at 13.5 percent alcohol and delivers beautiful aromatic precision and complexity in its blend of sweet dark berries, cassis, cigar ash, dark soil tones, violets, a touch of tobacco leaf, cedar and a smoky topnote. On the palate the wine is pure, full-bodied and very elegant in profile, with a more transparent personality than the cabernet sauvignon from this vineyard, a lovely core of fruit, fine-grained tannins and a long, poised and nascently complex finish. This is outstanding wine in the making!

John Gilman, Sept-Oct 2021, Issue #95



This offers a burst of cherry and loganberry paste flavors along with hints of anise, and singed vanilla. A touch high-toned throughout, with an open and accessible feel.

JM, March 31, 2022



95 Year after year I have been massively impressed with the quality of Cabernet Franc that Cathy Corison produces. This latest edition from the 2018 vintage evokes a beautiful texture with ripe red currants woven together with cigar box, rose water and black tea flavors. The minerality and tension of the wine really shine through, as this has a really long way to go in the cellar.

owenbargreen.com, September 14, 2021



94 The 2018 'Helios' Cabernet Franc is a wonderful expression made in a classic style. It instantly opens to aromas of raspberries and dark plums which are woven together with tobacco, spices, crushed gravel, and pencil lead... all emerging from the glass. On the palate this possesses a lovely medium body with fine, beautifully polished tannins. Focused and impeccably balanced, with lovely underlying acidity that adds a wonderful sense of vibrancy through the finish. Elegant and precise, this is a fantastic Cabernet Franc that is already showing plenty of character, but will age gracefully.

Joe D'Angelo, Summer 2021