

2019 Helios Sunbasket Vineyard Cabernet Franc



The unusually cool summer and fall of 2019 culminated in our picking two weeks later than usual, resulting in my kind of vintage. Cool days allowed long hang-time, giving rise to complex, intense flavors, and cold nights promoted inky color and balancing natural acidity.

This wine is lit up, jumping out of the glass with violet and rose perfume, red cherries, tobacco, cedar and notes of dried *herbes de Provence*. Flavors follow, with gravelly minerality complementing the firm structure with snappy acidity and velvet tannins.

~ Cathy Corison

Decanter

95 A soprano among Napa Cabernet Francs, this has a buoyant lightness of being. Corison is always among the first in Napa to harvest, in order to capture acidity in the grapes and freshness in the wine. Lots of red fruit, violets and lavender, plus a formidable tannic structure that will carry the wine for years to come. *Karen MacNeil, Decanter, October 2022*



94 The 2019 Cabernet Franc Helios Sunbasket Vineyard marries the depth of the year with a good deal of Franc character in a wine that shows all of the radiance that is so typical of this St. Helena site. Crushed flowers, bright red-toned fruit, mint and spice lend notable brightness to this super-expressive, inviting Franc from Cathy Corison. *Antonio Galloni, Vinous, October 2021*



Top 100 Wines of 2022 – Best Cabernet Franc

96 ...a wine of silken refinement, red-fruit length and a kind of resinous, perfumed-rose breadth... Its clean fruit touches on tart red cherry, boysenberry and plum skin tannins, layered with notes of tobacco leaf and tar. A supple pleasure, this is hard to resist.

Joshua Greene, Wine & Spirits Magazine, Fall 2022

WINE ENTHUSIAST

Best Wines of 2022

98 – Cellar Selection Cathy Corison, the great producer, shows her singular style of powerful elegance and nuanced complexity in this wine. Aged 20 months in half-new French oak barrels, it displays layers of cocoa powder, dried herb and dusty black olive, with underlying hints of blueberry and currant. Integrated, lengthy, earthy and perfumed, it stuns from start to finish.

Virginie Boone, Wine Enthusiast, 12/31/2022



17 Transparent crimson... with absolutely classic Cabernet Franc fragrance. You'd be hard pressed to put this in Napa if it were served blind. Much richer and more opulent on the palate than the nose suggests but it's still very sprightly and refreshing. Exceptionally round tannins make this a wine difficult to set aside in a cellar... This would be a great example for varietal education. *Jancis Robinson, 9 Nov 2022*



94 An array of black and blue-fruit flavors with touches of fresh mint, violets and rocky soil. Elegant and lean with medium body, soft tannins and a fresh, juicy finish. It's well-balanced with impressive drinkability. Drink or hold.

jamesuckling.com, November 4, 2021



***** Superb Cabernet Franc in an elegant style. It is medium rich, supple, and crisp, with firm structure, fine flavor (black currant, black cherry, rose petal, sweet pepper, herbs, oak), a long palate evolution, and a harmonious, lightly tannic finish... One of California's finest Cab Francs.

Ronn Wiegand, Restaurant Wine, Issues #204-209, June 2023



94 Delicately leafy and herbal, the 2019 Helios Cabernet Franc Sunbasket Vineyard is also red-fruited and charming, with raspberry and cherry notes complementing the sage and thyme nuances on the nose. Medium-bodied, streamlined and focused into a long, gently tapered finish, it's a precise counterpoint to the raft of oversized valley-floor Cabernets that dominate much of the market.

Joe Czerwinski, Wine Advocate, 15th Sep 2022



93 The single-varietal 2019 Helios Sunbasket Vineyard Cabernet Franc is deep garnet-purple in color. It skips out with cheery notes of redcurrant jelly, black raspberries, and boysenberries, plus suggestions of mint tea and tilled soil. The medium-bodied palate is elegantly crafted and vivacious with a lively backbone and soft tannins, finishing on a lingering mineral note.

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Independent, 2-16-23



On the one hand a moderately full-bodied version of Cabernet Franc, but, on the other, a wine that nonetheless manages to be surprisingly spry and relatively light on its feet and one that is not burdened by as much tannin as is common in most varietal bottlings, this year's Helios very much shows the careful, comparatively restrained winemaking hand of its maker. It is wholly enjoyable now but will age quite well by dint of its balanced composition and, when set aside in a quiet corner of the cellar, should be in lovely drinking shape upon arriving at its tenth birthday.

Connoisseurs' Guide to California Wine, October 2022

JEB DUNNUCK

The 2019 Cabernet Franc Helios Sunbasket Vineyard has a medium ruby/ purple color to go with attractive red and blackberry fruits as well as leafy herbs, spring flowers, and underbrush nuances. It's medium-bodied, supple, and elegant, with light tannins and loads of charm.

jebdunnuck.com, 3/10/22



96 ...this (wine) opens with ebullient aromas of red rose petals, cigar ash, red bell pepper and marionberry preserves. The palate is mineral-driven and rich, with a seamless texture. Very pretty, with a rich core of red and dark fruits, with graphite and herbal undertones, this outstanding wine is already nicely evolved. Give this at least an hour of air if enjoying in its bright youth.

owenbargreen.com, May 23, 2022



93 The 2019 Sunbasket Cabernet Franc is a spectacular wine from Corison. Elegant and refined, this begins with inviting aromas of black raspberries and red berries that are woven together with tobacco, wet gravel, fresh cut florals and a hint of licorice. The palate is medium-bodied and beautifully structured with fine-grained tannins that result in a gorgeous mouthfeel. It displays excellent overall balance of fruit and acidity with a wonderful sense of freshness that takes it through the finish. This is a classic rendition of Cabernet Franc out of Napa, that's should age marvelously.

Joe D'Angelo, International Wine Report, May 2022

vinography

Medium to dark garnet in the glass, this wine smells of plums, cherries, and crushed hazelnuts. In the mouth, bright plummy flavors mix with cherry and cola as fantastic citrusy acidity electrifies the palate. Tight muscular tannins grip the edges of the tongue and the sides of the mouth, as the wine finishes juicy with hints of aromatic herbs. Excellent. Score: around **9.5**.

Alder Yarrow, vinography.com, 6/19/22

VIEW FROM THE CELLAR

93+ I love Cathy Corison's Cabernet Franc bottling and her 2019 from the Sunbasket Vineyard is another stellar wine. It comes in at 13.8 percent octane this year and offers up a refined, complex bouquet of cassis, currant leaf, cigar wrapper, a lovely base of soil tones, a touch of menthol and cedary oak. On the palate the wine is bright, full-bodied, focused and complex, with a fine core, lovey transparency and grip, fine-grained tannins and a long, seamlessly balanced and very classy finish. The Cheval Blanc of Napa Valley.

John Gilman, View from the Cellar, Issue #98, March-April 2022



96 The nose offers up pine needle and juniper with essence of mint and blueberry. The palate entry is saturated black fruit, supple, ripe vine berries and blossoms that exude sweet juiciness. It finishes with fine-grained tannins redolent of tea and lavender.

Doug Wilder, free run juice, purely domestic wine report, May 8, 2022