

2023 Helios Sunbasket Vineyard Cabernet Franc



Ample rainfall broke a 3-year drought in 2023 and ideal weather at flowering in the spring promoted a bumper crop. The ripening season was one of the longest and coolest in several years, and that extended hang time for the grapes resulted in one of the most anticipated vintages in recent memory.

The vibrant raspberry and tart cherry fruit core is complemented by dusty violet perfume. Dried Italian herbs, green olives and white pepper add a savory nuance, while almond notes bring richness to the palate. Cocoa and baking spices linger on the finish.

~ Cathy Corison & Grace Corison Martin, September 2026

Decanter

96 Cathy Corison has been crafting this single-vineyard-designate from the 2.8-hectare Sunbasket Vineyard in the St. Helena AVA since 2014, though her connection to the site dates back to the 1980s, when she first began sourcing fruit from the vineyard. The wine is aged for 22 months in new French oak. Positively gorgeous, it delivers a pure expression of fruit, interlaced with vivid, high-toned notes of sage and crushed wild herbs, layered with currant and black olive. Ultra-fine, satiny tannins cradle the juicy fruit with remarkable finesse. Lively, energetic, and beautifully fresh throughout.

Jonathan Cristaldi, Decanter, 28 Jan 2026



95 Vibrant, fresh and energetic, with bright red fruit, dried herb, potpourri, graphite and spice aromas. The palate is taut, with crunchy tannins and mouthwatering acidity cutting through the lovely dense red fruit and spices. Delightful now and for many years to come. Drink or hold. *Ryan Montgomery, jamesuckling.com, February 2, 2026*

vinography

Medium to dark garnet in the glass, this wine smells of cherries, flowers, aromatic green herbs, and plums. In the mouth, plum, plum skin, crushed nuts, cocoa powder, and flower petals are seamlessly welded in a beautifully balanced and harmonious package, wrapped in suede-supple tannins and brimming with gorgeous acidity. A stunner of a wine that comes across as totally effortless in the mouth. It's unbelievably good now, I can't imagine the heights to which it will ascend in a decade. Without a doubt, the best version of this wine I've ever had from Cathy. 14% alcohol. Score: **a perfect 10**.

Alder Yarrow, Vinography.com, 4/16/26



95 Deep garnet-purple colored, the 2023 Cabernet Franc Helios Sunbasket Vineyard is 100% Cabernet Franc. It skips out of the glass with bright, vibrant scents of red currants, black raspberries, and wild thyme, plus underlying suggestions of pencil lead and forest floor. The medium- to full-bodied palate is tight-knit and bright-fruited with a lively backbone and lightly chewy tannins, finishing long and savory.

Lisa Perrotti-Brown, The Wine Palate, April 2026



The 2023 Cabernet Franc Helios Sunbasket Vineyard is a tiny bottling of just four barrels. Crushed flowers, bright red-toned fruit, chalk, mint and white pepper lend lovely aromatic brilliance. The 2023 is soft and delicate, with fine balance that very much reflects the style of this cold, late-ripening vintage in its lithe personality.

Antonio Galloni, Vinous, November 2025

jimsilver.substack.com

The color is exceptional of course. Not terribly dark but plenty red. The nose is especially elegant and Bordeaux-like... Briary red fruits are surrounded by a little bit of black fruit and some dark chocolate. There's just the smallest whiff of herb. In the mouth, the tannins are short and a little brisk. The wine is still soft, though. It's impressive for its elegance, though it carries very little weight around, it's very flavorful and forward.

Jim Silver, March 16, 2026