

FRAZIER VS. LUPINE HILL

As many of you know, here at Frazier we have two labels: FRAZIER and LUPINE HILL. One of the most frequently asked questions at Frazier has to be, “what makes Frazier and Lupine Hill wines different”? While most everyone understands the concept behind a reserve wine not everyone understands the concept behind a second bottling that is also 100% estate produced. Accompanied by our first release of wine bottled under the Lupine Hill label was this explanation, given by Bill Frazier, of how the Lupine Hill and Frazier bottlings are both different and, at the same time, wonderfully unique.

"Once in a while, a rare find just drops in one's lap and this may just be yours. When I shook hands with John Gibson to be my winemaker, the agreement came with a few details on which John simply would not compromise. One of those details was that John had the exclusive right to cull any and all juice or wine from a Frazier bottling. Now, at the time that seemed all too logical, but it soon became clear that John was only going to put the wine that fit his quality criteria by 110%. That meant that a large portion of the press wine and some of the free run was never going to see the backside of a Frazier label. Often, he did not make this selection until bottling time. The result was that a whole heck of a lot of very good wine was ending up in other guy's bottles. We ended up selling this wine on the bulk market for quite a price. I asked John if, in his opinion, this wine was bad. His answer: 'No, just not perfect'. Well, it did not take a long time for him to see where I was going with this and by 1997 we knew that the time had come to start an alternative label. Thus, Lupine Hill was born. The wine is certainly not as big as Frazier, but it offers a silky, lush, imminently quaffable glass".

John Gibson has his own explanation as to how the Lupine Hill wines came about: “In 1995 and 1996, I chose to declassify or downgrade portions of the wine which we made, knowing that including them into the Frazier Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot would have detracted from the definition of fruit characteristic, depth, and richness. We sold those small lots of wine in bulk to other wineries who now eagerly await what future wines I choose to declassify; then came along the 1997 Vintage. The 1997 vintage was what we as winemakers call “A God Given Vintage”. It was not difficult to make outstanding wines in a year which gave us an excellent growing season, a harvest without detrimental weather, and last but not least, a very large crop. As was my usual practice, I still chose to declassify some of the wines, but there was a difference in this year in comparison to previous vintages. Whether it was the added experience we had in nurturing the fruit in the vineyard or the handling of the wine in the winery and barrel cellar, these wines were able to stand on their own as a blend with similar fruit flavors as the Frazier Cabernet Sauvignon, but with a rounder and softer mouth-feel”.