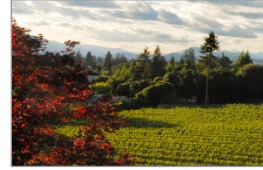


# 2019 ROBERT CRAIG WINERY

## HOWELL MOUNTAIN MERLOT



**WINEMAKER:** Jason Price  
**REGION:** Napa Valley, California  
**VARIETALS:** Merlot (81%), Cabernet Sauvignon (15%), Malbec (4%)  
**MATURATION:** 18 months in 65% new French oak  
**ANALYSIS:** 14.95% alc/vol | TA: 6.3 g/L | pH: 3.71

**VINTAGE:** The 2019 Napa Valley vintage kicked off with substantial rain in winter and spring. Budbreak and bloom arrived on time, but frost and wind at budbreak and flower reduced yields. Regardless, the growing season was long and even, with a smooth harvest that maximized hang-time and color. Several passes to drop fruit in the vineyard resulted in explosive flavors, with ripe, round tannins.

**TERROIR:** Situated on the north end of the Howell Mountain summit cap at 2,250' of elevation, this 26-acre vineyard, first planted in 1950, rests on a plateau overlooking the southeast face of Mount St Helena and the whole of Pope Valley. Replanted by Duckhorn Winery in 1998 to primarily Bordeaux varieties on varying rootstocks, the Candlestick Vineyard produces wines that are dense, dark and explosive with flavor. The pure white volcanic ash and Tufa soils are poor and well drained leading to low yields and intensely flavored berries.

**TASTING NOTES:** Our 2019 Howell Mountain Merlot was the "biggest" wine we have ever made at Robert Craig Winery. The lab numbers for complex anthocyanin (color and body) and tannin count were off the chart. Despite its size and gravitas, the 2019 Merlot has a lushness and supple quality that make it a joy to drink even while young, though cellaring will improve the wine for the foreseeable future. Deep cassis, blackberry, iron, lead pencil and Howell Mountain stones exude from the nose and expand on the palate. A very limited number of cases exist of what is perhaps the finest offering ever from our winery.

**ABOUT ROBERT CRAIG WINERY:** With a passion for Napa Valley Mountain Cabernet, Bob Craig founded his eponymous winery on Howell Mountain with three friends from business school. In 2004, CEO Elton Slone joined the winery and became a full partner in 2007. Following Bob's retirement and departure from the wine business in 2012, Slone has continued to move the business forward with the other three founding partners. Known for producing small-lot, site-expressive wines from high elevation vineyards, Robert Craig Winery consistently garners high scores and positive accolades from the wine press.

