WHAT A DIFFERENCE A BARREL MAKES!
Although the Holy Smoke Cabernet Sauvignon in this shipment was aged in 100% French oak barrels, some of our other wines, including our Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon, are aged in a combination of French and American oak barrels. Hospitality Coordinator Travis Schimmer, who guides estate tours that include a tasting of the same wine aged in French and American oak, explains why. “When you taste these wines side by side, it’s easy to see the differences between French and American oak. French oak tends to be tighter grained, and as a result the flavor and tannin from the oak is extracted into the wine over a longer period of time. American oak is looser grained; its flavors are imparted quickly and more aggressively. French oak tends to lend a subtle spicy character, while American oak brings sweeter notes of vanilla and clove. One isn’t necessarily better than the other, though I’ve found that people often have preferences for one or the other. Personally, for our Napa Cab, I like the combination!”

DOWN THE AISLE…
Travis Schimmer often leads tours through the aisles of our wine caves, but this past August he walked down a different aisle when he married his longtime sweetheart Naomi Pita. The wedding was a real family affair. Naomi’s brother, a pastor, officiated at the ceremony, and the couple’s dog, a Staffordshire Terrier, also played a role. “She was better behaved than my nephew,” says Travis, a wine country native who has worked at Flora Springs for nearly 6 years.
Congratulations Travis!
Established as an official sub-appellation of Napa Valley in 1993, the Oakville AVA is centered around the town of Oakville just south of the Rutherford AVA. Like Rutherford, the Oakville AVA stretches from the Vaca Mountains on the east across the valley to the Mayacamas Mountains on the west. And like its neighbor appellation to the north, Oakville has an unusually high concentration of celebrated producers of Cabernet Sauvignon.

While Oakville enjoys its fair share of sunshine, the region is also characterized by fog, which generally creeps in at night and settles low to the ground before gradually lifting during the early morning hours. In fact our Holy Smoke Vineyard gets its name -- at least in part -- from the ghostly white wisps that slowly evaporate as the morning sun warms the vines. This fog serves an important purpose, keeping the region cool and grape acidity and tannins at desirable levels throughout the growing season.

Holy Smoke Vineyard, a small 15-acre parcel that our family purchased in 1980, sits just off the Oakville Crossroad in the middle of the appellation.

“It think this area is even a little bit cooler,” says Vineyard Manager Pat Garvey. “If you look at aerial photos, you see that the fog sticks around just a bit longer in this small section near Conn Creek.”

With heavy, gravelly loam soils that are only moderately fertile, the organically-farmed Holy Smoke Vineyard produces one of our favorite single-vineyard Cabernet Sauvignons. Its profile is perhaps more Bordeaux-like than our other Cabs, with bright, red fruit flavors and an elegant, structured acidity.

While he’s happy with the grapes and wines from Holy Smoke, Pat is hoping that one of these days the vineyard might turn up some gold. “Several years back I was installing a drain line in the vineyard, and when I went home to take a shower I noticed that my wedding ring was gone,” he said. “I always look for it when I’m out there.”

WHERE THERE’S SMOKE...THERE’S A REALLY GREAT CAB!

2011 HOLY SMOKE TASTING NOTES

Our 2011 Holy Smoke Cabernet Sauvignon captures the alluring vibrancy of a young vineyard coming into its own. After extensive research on this small piece of land in the Oakville appellation, we chose to plant a famous Cabernet clone known simply as “Clone 4.” The synergy between clone and vineyard site allows us to create a single vineyard Cabernet that may be the most Bordeaux-like wine in our portfolio, exhibiting what we call the full “red fruit trinity”—raspberry, cherry and boysenberry. In a vintage that required vigilance in the vineyard and cellar, our 2011 Holy Smoke displays ripe berries and hints of butterscotch and anise on the nose, followed by notes of vanilla and cedar on the palate. With firm acid and an elegant tannin structure, this is a bold and complex Cabernet that will cellar beautifully for many years to come.

CELLAR FACTS

Appellation: Oakville, Napa Valley
Composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon
Cases: 380
Aging: 22 months; 80% new French oak; 20% one year old French oak
Enjoyability: Drink now or cellar. Pull the cork until 2022 for optimum enjoyment.

PRICING & REORDER

Price $100 | Shipment $90 | Reorder $80

TO PLACE YOUR ORDER PLEASE CONTACT WINE CLUB MANAGER KENNY WERLE AT (800) 913-1118 OR INFO@FLORASPRINGS.COM
where there's smoke...there's a really great cab!

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On one of our first trips up to Napa Valley my wife Carrie and I were driving with her parents, Otto and Mary, German immigrants who were visiting us from Minnesota. Otto loved the outdoors, and at one point we passed a particularly scenic vineyard and he told me to “stop!” He jumped out of the car, and in his thick German accent he cried “Holy Smoke! This is incredible!”

When it came time to name the Oakville vineyard we were fortunate enough to purchase in 1980, Holy Smoke – a term Otto used often – was the first name that came to mind. Over time it’s proven to be an apt description of the wine that comes from this special vineyard off the Oakville Crossroad. Each time I pour a glass and take in the big, beautiful aromas, Otto’s words come to mind!