

MATERRA

CUNAT FAMILY VINEYARDS

Sustainable Winegrowing and Vineyard Management

The Cunat Family Vineyards are located on the valley floor in the Oak Knoll District of Napa Valley – North of the cooler Los Carneros region and South of the warmer, upper valley appellations. Morning fog and cooler evenings moderate the growing climate, giving the Oak Knoll district one of the longest growing seasons in the Valley. The microclimates across Oak Knoll are suited for many different grape varieties. Our property is located in a cooler microclimate of the district, making our vineyard ideal for both Merlot and Chardonnay.

Building our cutting-edge facility from the ground up in 2014 has allowed us to integrate numerous elements of sustainability, currently and looking forward, into every facet of our business, including our vineyards, winemaking and operations.

SOIL COMPOSITION

Our Oak Knoll vineyard features the characteristic alluvial silty clay loam soils derived from the Dry Creek alluvial fan. The temperate climate keeps the soil warm, extending the growing season. Cover crops are planted to prevent soil erosion. Currently we are planting winter wheat between our vineyard rows.

CONSERVE WATER

Our Gen 2 Super Controller self-pumpover tanks eliminate the need for cleaning hoses, pumps and attachments following each pumpover. The current system saves a minimum of 8,100 gallons of water during harvest, which is approximately 25% to 60% of the normal amount of water needed for cleaning. As we continue adding additional pumps to our tanks our water usage will be further reduced.

We are also blessed with a fairly high water table, which allows us to dry farm most of the time. Only in years of extreme drought would we need to water, and when we do use water, it is drip irrigation to minimize water use. We also landscape with drought tolerant plants, further reducing the need to water for landscape maintenance.

REDUCE CHEMICAL USE

As the vineyards are being re-planted, we are changing the orientation of the rows to take advantage of maximum sun exposure, which, in addition to yielding higher quality fruit, also reduces mold and fungus. We are also currently planting winter wheat as a cover crop. Each year, soils are tested to determine which nutrients they may be lacking, and then a cover crop is chosen that can best replenish the deficiency. This allows us to naturally fertilize the soils without chemicals. In our offices and tasting rooms, we choose only environmentally sustainable cleaning products.

REDUCE ENERGY USE

Our new production winery and vineyard facility will be solar powered, satisfying at least 75% energy needs for the property. All Cunat Family Vineyard facilities use energy efficient LED lighting, timed thermostats and low flow water fixtures. Shipments to the winery and to our customers are consolidated to reduce truck traffic and fuel consumption.

RECYCLE

Our office, production and vineyard management practices all emphasize recycling. We recycle all waste and unused cardboard, glass, plastic and paper from our production facility and tasting room, and we compost all organic waste during harvest including grape skins, seeds and stems.

RESTORE HABITATS

We have protected the tall mature Oak and Walnut trees that border our vineyard on two sides. We have also planted native Redwoods. These newly planted and mature trees make excellent habitat for a variety of small birds, owls, hawks and other birds of prey. Hawks and Owls keep rodents out of the vineyard. These trees also provide a home for bug eating bats and western blue birds. We have added blue bird houses to help support our thriving population of western blue birds and plan to install Owl and Bat boxes too.

We have bordered the property edge that is adjacent to the river with native red woods. These trees are very unappealing to bugs and mites. We are planning to continue planting native species that are bug resistant. Our goal is to use only plants that are native to the area.

RESPONSIBLE PEST CONTROL

In our vineyards we rely primarily on sulfur, an organic fungicide, to control mildew and rot when the condition is present. Cover crops and crop waste provide our primary sources of fertilization.

NAPA GREEN

This voluntary program is Napa Valley's 'best practices' land use and wine production program. Participating wineries gain certification through restoration, enhancement and preservation of their vineyard properties and by utilizing production processes that conserve water and energy, prevent pollution and reduce solid wastes. As we continue re-planting and expanding our hospitality facilities, we look forward to participating with our neighboring wineries in this sustainability certification.