

Joseph Phelps

One of the smallest production vintages in two decades, this cuvée delivers layered complexity and a plush texture with a sense of graceful restraint.

JOSEPH PHELPS
VINEYARDS

Insignia 2017

California, USA



Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Malbec, 2% Cabernet Franc

Region and Vineyards

The 2017 Joseph Phelps Insignia draws its character from five estate vineyards, each located in some of **Napa Valley's most prestigious AVAs**. Nearly half of the blend originates from the **Las Rocas Vineyard (46%)** in the **Stags Leap District**, a terroir renowned for its finely grained tannins and graphite-like minerality. This is complemented by 22% from the **Barboza Vineyard**, also in Stags Leap, adding layered floral and spicy lift.

Further depth and freshness come from **Suscol Vineyard (13%)** in South Napa, which provides cool-climate energy, while 10% from **Yountville Vineyard** (Oak Knoll District) brings supple fruit and elegance. The final 9% is sourced from the **Home Ranch in St. Helena**, contributing richness and structural backbone. These diverse sites create a multidimensional wine, showcasing the estate's commitment to **terroir-driven blending**.

Winemaking

The 2017 blend is composed of **94% Cabernet Sauvignon**, **4% Malbec**, and **2% Cabernet Franc**. Despite the season's climatic challenges, including heat spikes and the infamous October wildfires (which did not affect the estate fruit), the team carefully selected and vinified each parcel to preserve purity and site expression.

The wine was aged for **24 months in 100% new French oak**, sourced from premier coopers such as Taransaud, Dargaud Jaegle, Demptos, Marcel Cadet, and Sylvain. This élevage provided depth and integration, enhancing the wine's structure while supporting its vibrant fruit. The result is a finely tuned wine with a **velvety mouthfeel and lingering aromatic complexity**.

Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Deep ruby core with violet edges and excellent clarity.
- **Aroma**: Aromatics of mocha, roasted espresso, cedar, blueberry pie, ripe plum, clove oil, and redcurrant jelly, with floral potpourri hints.
- **Palate**: Full-bodied yet precise, displaying black cherry and blackberry preserves, vanilla essence, and spice box complexity. Silky tannins and vibrant acidity guide a long, persistent finish with a savory edge.

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Did you know?

The 2017 Insignia is among the **rarest vintages of the past two decades**, with limited production due to climatic challenges and highly selective harvesting. It is also one of the few vintages to include **Cabernet Franc**, which added delicate floral and herbal layers to the final blend.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Herb-crusted rack of lamb**: Complements the wine's spice, berry depth, and supple tannins.
- **Beef short ribs with mole sauce**: Mirrors the mocha, dark chocolate, and savory character of the wine.
- **Wild mushroom pappardelle**: Highlights the earthy depth and textural elegance.
- **Charcoal-grilled venison**: Enhances the wine's darker fruit core and long, smoky finish.



Robert Parker (RP) : 96 Points (2017)

The 2017 Insignia is a blend of 94% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Malbec and 2% Cabernet Franc coming from: 46% Las Rocas vineayrd (Stags Leap District), 22% Barboza vineyard (Stags Leap District), 13% Suscol vineyard (South Napa Valley), 10% Yountville vineyard (Oak Knoll District) and 9% Home Ranch (St. Helena). It was aged for 24 months in 100% new French oak barrels. Deep garnet-purple colored, it comes bounding out of the glass with exuberant scents of Black Forest cake, preserved plums and blueberry pie plus touches of redcurrant jelly, potpourri, clove oil and dark chocolate. Medium to full-bodied, the palate has gained weight from it's in-barrel offering, boasting rich, decadently perfumed black fruit preserves flavors with a racy backbone and velvety tannins, finishing long and spicy.



Decanter (DCT) : 96 Points (2017)

This has a real sense of freshness and grip. A pure expression of Cabernet with a shot of eucalyptus and menthol, extremely concentrated but with elegance and power. The tannins just grip on to your palate and don't let go leading to a lovely chewy finish. This is great stuff, with a discernibly finessed style that shows a fine tannic balance magnified through the lens of Californian heat and laced through with cassis, espresso and chocolate block. Great structure, this will take a few decades of ageing in its stride. 100% new oak, from five vineyards around Napa Valley, mainly in Stags Leap and Oak Knoll.



James Suckling (JS) : 96 Points (2017)

A beautiful, focused wine with a tight center palate of blackberries, blueberries and dark chocolate. Very subtle. Hints of mint and sage, too. Medium to full body and fine, racy tannins. A reserved and very pretty Insignia. Fresh finish. Hard not to drink now, but better in 2022.