

Janzen - Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper, Cabernet Sauvignon, Napa Valley

- A Napa Valley emblem of one of the most coveted and historic vineyard sites
- Hallmark Missouri Hopper characteristics of black fruit, charcoal and firm, supple tannins
 - From Star winemaker, Kirk Venge

The Producer

It's unusual to find a Napa Cab producer who can walk the line between serious and fun, and Claus Janzen is that rare exception. Janzen set the tone in 1993 with his first label, Bacio Divino ("The Divine Kiss"), which featured pedigreed Napa Cabernet in a seductive red blend. The wine was an instant success, and allowed him to launch the Janzen label featuring single vineyard Napa Cabernets. The common thread in all of his wines is their superior breeding, quality worthy of the finest tables, and unpretentious friendly style.

Originally from Winnipeg Canada, Janzen escaped the brutal winters to find work in the equally cold but picturesque Swiss Alps where he was exposed to the great wines of Europe and in particular great Italian wines. This sparked a passion to work in wine and he relocated his family to live in Napa. There he parlayed his international connections, to land a position marketing Caymus Vineyards worldwide.

After a dozen years of building the Caymus brand internationally, Janzen answered his calling to make his own wine. He set his sights on making a wine that was elegant and yet joyful in the tradition of European culture, particularly the Super Tuscan blends which dominated the world wine scene at the time. He activated his wide network in Napa to quickly find the best talents and vineyards and went to work. In 1993, Bacio Divino was created to merge the elegance of Sangiovese with the star of Napa, Cabernet Sauvignon. A few years later, the blend was successfully reversed for the playful blend, Pazzo. Claus' experience in Napa led him to be an early client of superstar grower, Andy Beckstoffer. This enduring relationship has allowed Janzen to access prime blocks of Beckstoffer's Heritage vineyards including the prized To-Kalon vineyard. He also acquired his own estate vineyard in the hills above Dutch Henry Canyon in Calistoga.

While he used Cabernet as the core of the Bacio Divino blend, it rapidly became apparent that the quality was too good not to celebrate as stand alone bottlings. Thus was born the Janzen label, which features these great sources in single vineyard wines including To-Kalon, Missouri Hopper and Janzen's Cloudy's Vineyard Estate. The line also includes an entry level Napa Cabernet, which combines fruit from the Janzen estate and Beckstoffer vineyards.

Kirk Venge, son of legendary Napa winemaker Nils Venge and a lifelong Napa resident, came on board to craft Bacio Divino and has continued to expand the lineup since. Venge makes the wines to be approachable and joyful, yet with great depth and complexity deserving of the finest wine lists.

The Wine

Located north of the town of Yountville in the Oakville AVA, the 45 acres that is now called Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper was originally part of a large piece of land owned by George C. Yount, from whom the town of Yountville takes its name. Charles Hopper purchased the land in 1877 and gave it to his daughter Missouri. Though most of Napa was planted to prunes and walnuts at the time, they cleverly planted the land to wine grapes. In 1996 Andy Beckstoffer added this parcel to his already impressive lineup of vineyard holdings and in 2002, Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper became part a land conservation easement that forever prohibits non-agricultural development. Primarily Bale clay loam and sediment washed down from the Mayacamas, these "bench" soils are gravelly and deep. Classic wines from this site are supple, fleshy and authoritative; they exhibit black and blue fruit, exotic incense, gravel and charcoal. Enjoy now after some decanting or cellar for a decade or longer.



Region: Napa Valley

Appellation: Oakville AVA

Vineyard: Beckstoffer Missouri Hopper

Altitude: Oakville alluvial bench at the southern end of the AVA

Soil: Bale clay, loam, gravel

Alcohol: 15%

Varietal composition: 100% Cabernet Sauvignon

Production: 250 cases

Vinification and aging: 26 mo in 100% new Taransaud French oak

Tasting Notes: Intensely concentrated and layered, this is lush and firm Oakville Cabernet with suede-like tannins. Characteristics of blackberry, black currant, black licorice, thyme, lavender, and river stones fall in balance, reflecting of one of the most revered and historic sites in the Valley.