

## Porter Creek, Carignane, Old Vine

- Recognized as one of the best Carignanes produced in California
  - Idyllic qualities of perfume, softness and spiciness
    - Organically farmed

### The Producer

With a focus on organic, hillside-grown, vineyard-designated wines primarily from its Russian River estate, Porter Creek produces some of the most balanced, elegant, and refined wines in America. Since the first vintage in 1982, the small family-owned winery has gone beyond its flagship Pinot Noir to produce Chardonnay, Zinfandel, Carignane, Syrah and other varietals that have attracted cult-like followings among experts and consumers alike. Porter Creek's small production and consistent high quality keep the wines high in demand, and many sell out just months after release.

Located in the most prestigious part of the Russian River appellation, Porter Creek was established by George Davis in 1979—before Russian River Valley was an appellation. The estate features 20 acres planted—all hillside vineyards (averaging 20 degree grade), reminiscent of grand cru vineyards in the Côte d'Or, Burgundy.

Following the European vigneron model, George Davis groomed his eldest son, Alex, to become proprietor and winemaker. Before taking the helm in 1997, Alex learned how to operate every aspect of the winery—from welding tractors, to running the books; he also studied enology and viticulture at Fresno State and Dijon, and trained in Dijon (with Christophe Roumier and Bernard Michelot), and in the Rhône Valley (Marcel Guigal).

With his years of apprenticeship, Alex developed a strong vision for balanced, vineyard-driven wines—a vision that he has successfully realized vintage after vintage, through rare dedication, passion and attention to detail. While trends favored riper, more fruit-driven wine, Alex stayed true to his vision, even converting the estate to organic and then biodynamic farming at considerable expense, to coax the best from the soils.

During harvest, sorting is done in the vineyard to minimize handling. While common in Burgundy but less so in California, Alex uses whole cluster press on whites and about 1/3 on Pinot Noirs, rendering more flavor in wine.

Fermentation is natural: native yeasts are rarely supplemented; ideal temperatures are attained through harvesting at night when grapes are cold and warming tanks with blankets.

Winemaking is gravitationally oriented. Alex achieves a fine tannin structure through extended aging in limited use of new oak. Wines age in bottle for 3-6 months prior to release.

### The Wine

This idyllic Carignane is beautifully perfumed and soft like a Pinot with spice of the Southern Rhône. The wine is produced from some of the region's oldest vines—all dry farmed—from a vineyard started by Italian immigrants during prohibition. From vine to bottle, Davis treats it like a grand cru. Recognized by critics and French producers for showing what Carignane can be.



**Appellation:** Mendocino County

**Region:** Hopland

**Vineyard:** Trimble

**Vine age:** 63 years old

**Varietal Blend:** 100% Carignane

**Planting system:** Head trained

**Farming:** Organic

**Yield:** 2.5 tons/acre

**Harvest:** Late October

**Vinification:** 100% destemmed and fermented for 2-3 days in French oak barrels up to 8 years old; 100% native yeasts

**Aging:** 3800 liter wooden tank 50%, rest of 50% is aged in small barrels (228l); 11 months aging

**Production:** 800 cases

**Tasting Notes:** Delicate scent of red raspberry, licorice and pepper spice. Medium bodied with elegant tannins, leading to a lengthy finish.