

A Farmer's Wine Man — This Napa Valley Estate is Worth Looking At

Trying a \$90 Find That's Worth a Little Wait

BY JAMES BROCK (HTTPS://WWW.PAPERCITYMAG.COM/AUTHOR/JAMES-BROCK/) // 10.22.18



I have written about Gamble Family wines on several previous occasions, and I'm happy to do so again now, because I recently tasted the 2014 Gamble Family Vineyards Paramount Proprietary Red Blend, and I liked the experience.

It is the flagship wine of Gamble Family Vineyards, and for good reason. The blend is anchored by Cabernet Sauvignon grown in Oakville on the family's Home Vineyard, which is joined by Cabernet Franc from St. Helena (grapes from a low-yielding block), Merlot grown on Mt. Veeder and Petit Verdot from Mount St. Helena (32 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 32 percent Cabernet Franc, 28 percent Merlot and 8 percent Petit Verdot.)

Winemaker [Jim Close](http://www.gamblefamilyvineyards.com/?method=pages.showPage&PageID=1510720d-def7-5880-98cf-8b28a451e750&originalMarketingURL=Our-Story/Jim-Close) (<http://www.gamblefamilyvineyards.com/?method=pages.showPage&PageID=1510720d-def7-5880-98cf-8b28a451e750&originalMarketingURL=Our-Story/Jim-Close>) oversaw the process here, which involved each variety being harvested, fermented, and aged separately. The 2014 vintage is promising overall in the area. The Paramount was aged in 60-gallon French oak barrels for 20 months, and retails for \$90. Some 805 cases were produced.

You get black fruit and earthiness on the nose — think blackberry and black cherry, and soil/leather — in a bold and delicious way. Is there a touch of violet? There is, along with a fine, barely discernible spiciness (cinnamon or mace). It's a combination that makes for a fine and rewarding introduction to the wine, along with a frisson of warming anticipation.

Don't be in a hurry to take your first taste, and I recommend opening the bottle 25 minutes or so before you pour.

Now, to drink. The first sip offers body galore, and lush tannins that make one think longingly of a decade or more of cellaring to go, such is their presence. You get tobacco, leather, smoke, some vanilla and eucalyptus... in short, this is complex and layered, a wine that speaks with both grace and gravitas. You want to serve this one in the evening, with great company and even better food.

To the food, duck breast would be a wonderful pairing, as would grilled lamb or elk. We opted for a steak, a grilled rib eye done simply, with nothing more than salt, pepper and butter, and it was a fine meal.

I had dinner a year or so ago with Tom Gamble, who owns the estate, and he speaks "farmer" through and through, in the best way possible. His family has been in Napa since 1916, and he is proud of that heritage. You won't get "wine speak" from him, but you will get a profound sense of purpose and dedication to the land and vines that grow on it.

His passion is another great reason to try this wine (and the other selections from Gamble).