



# Diamond Series



## Frank Family Vineyards

Of all the luminaries who have made their way to Napa Valley and settled into the business of making marvelous wines, none has possessed a more distinctive resumé than Rich Frank of this month's *Diamond Series* selection, Frank Family Vineyards.

Rich Frank served in a number of top Hollywood positions, including Chairman of Walt Disney Television and Communications and President of Walt Disney Studios. He also oversaw development of the Disney Channel. Prior to Disney, Rich Frank was President of the Paramount Television Group and one of the founders of the USA Network. He was ultimately responsible for television series like *Cheers*, *Taxi*, *Winds of War* and *Golden Girls*. Talk shows such as *Ellen* and *Regis and Kathie Lee*, and movies including *Good Morning Vietnam*, *Pretty Women*, *Father of the Bride* and *The Lion King* achieved success under his aegis. He was also President of the Academy of Television Arts and Sciences for six years and active in a number of other prestigious associations.

A native of the Flatbush section of Brooklyn and graduate of the University of Illinois, Frank realized an early interest in wine during his celebrated business career. "While at Disney starting in the 1970s, I was required to do a lot of international traveling, particularly to Europe," he explained. "I was fortunate to be wined and dined wherever we went, to the best restaurants that served the finest foods, and, of course, accompanied by the most superb wines."

Frank started coming to Napa Valley in the late 1980s for short weekends, and finally purchased a home in Rutherford, one of the factors that made Frank ultimately decide to invest in the wine business. Along with Koerner Rombauer (Rombauer Vineyards), the pair resurrected the old Larkmead Winery in Calistoga that was first constructed in 1884 and is today included on the National Register of Historical



Places. The initial partnership was called Frank-Rombauer and produced its first cases (200) in 1992. By the year 1997, the fledgling winery had prospered to the point that a name change (Frank Family Vineyards) was necessary to keep it distinguished from Rombauer's highly successful Rombauer Vineyards.

In 2000, the most devastating fire to ever hit the Napa Valley destroyed some 60-70,000 cases of wine. Victims of the fire included all of the Frank Family Vineyards' inventory as well as the newly bottled prize wines from the heralded 1997 crop. "As you would imagine, the fire was totally devastating to everyone involved," recounted Frank. "It wasn't just our wines but a lot of other wineries who used the facility for storage who were also affected. We were fortunate to be able to remove the barrels of our 1998 vintage from the bottom floor and actually had some wine to sell after it aged properly."

Frank Family Vineyards rebounded from the unfortunate circumstances and continued gaining friends and winning accolades. FFV's wines were praised by the wine media and supported by a loyal fan base that has continued to grow. "After the fire, some of our customers called and asked if we needed the wines back that they had just purchased to help us through the tough times," Frank recalled fondly. "Those were great gestures by wonderful people. We have always striven to give our customers really strong support and their support in return was truly a joy."

In early January of 2007, Frank bought out Rombauer's interest in FFV. "It was simply a matter of reaching the time for estate planning where our assets had to be directed in the right place," Frank added. "Koerner was continuing to expand his own operation and the parting was extremely amicable."

The fruit for Frank Family wines come from three estate Napa Valley vineyards including Winston Hill in the



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prestigious Rutherford appellation (and located on Rich Frank's personal estate), Lewis Vineyard in the heart of Napa-Carneros and home to the winery's Pinot Noir and Chardonnay vines, and lastly, S&J Vineyard nestled east of the Vaca Mountain range in the Capell Valley. The wines are made by Todd Graff, the winemaker at Frank Family Vineyards

since 2003. It is his mission to produce wines that live up to the heritage of the land and the vineyards from which they are from.

Rich and Leslie Frank are totally dedicated to the winery and were honored when Frank Family Vineyards was named the **Best Napa Winery of 2012** on the *Bay Area A-List*. When asked if he would rather be remembered for his fabled career in show business or for the great wines he has produced, Rich Frank put it simply. "At this time, I really can't say. All I can tell you for sure is that I know I have made a good many more terrible television shows than I have bad bottles of wine. At this point, the winery is where my heart is."

## Accolades and Tasting Notes

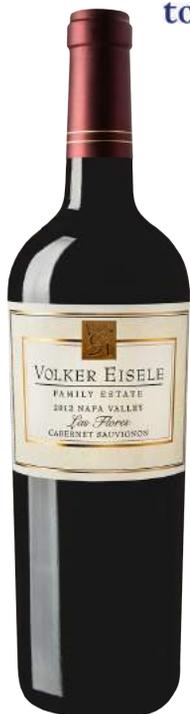
### Frank Family 2012 Winston Hill Red Blend

**94+ Points, Robert Parker's The Wine Advocate** — "The 2012 Winston Hill Proprietary Red Blend, which is 84% Cabernet Sauvignon, 9% Cabernet Franc and the rest Merlot and Petit Verdot, is a pretty serious hombre. Dense ruby/purple in color with notes of crème de cassis, graphite and concentrated black cherries, the wine has good acidity, sweet tannin and a full-bodied mouthfeel. The purity and overall personality and character of the wine are impressive. It is a very youthful, relatively unevolved wine with tremendous upside."

**93-Points, James Suckling** — "A red with tension and backbone plus black currant and spice character. Full body, tight tannins and finesse. Mineral too. Best wine from Frank Family Vineyards."

*The Winston Hill Vineyard: Winston Hill is located in the eastern side of the Napa Valley's Rutherford appellation along the Vaca Mountain range. The hand-terraced vine rows have southwestern exposure and consist of well-drained volcanic and sandstone soils that rise nearly 500 feet from the valley floor.*

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**94-POINTS** - Robert Parker's *The Wine Advocate*

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## Reorder

### Frank Family 2012 Winston Hill Proprietary Red Blend

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