

# Cabernet Franc

Red Wine - - - - - 12% ABV Vintage 2021

GRAPE	Cabernet Franc
REGION	Kanou Vineyard, Tomi, Nagano

WINEMAKERS: *Yutaka and Michiru Nakajima*

ABOUT THE WINE:

BOTTLES PRODUCED: 1,460

— Cabernet Franc from the Kanou Vineyard, one of their estate vineyards, on a steep hillside overlooking the town of Tomi, with the broad Chikuma river cutting through the volcanic valley below. It sits at 750m above sea level, composed mostly of clay and volcanic ash, with schist and sand, and is planted with Merlot, Chenin Blanc, and Sauvignon Blanc. Winters are cold here and lush and humid in the summer, though this area of Nagano sees relatively less rain than other areas of Honshu. No sprays were used, except for bordeaux mixture, and no tillage in the vineyard. The cover crop was mowed down and left in the rows between the vines.

The 2023 vintage saw easy growing conditions, due to plentiful sunshine and moderate rainfall. Increases in temperature, likely due to global warming, led to accelerated ripening rates and the risk for plummeting acidity. So the harvest date happened between September 30 and October 7, when the grapes were at 21 Brix, which was almost a full month earlier than past vintages. And the alternating pattern of heavy rain and hot and dry weather led to a significant uptick in harvest volume – almost 1.5 times normal. They decided to blend in some of the first crop from their newer vineyard – the Mido Vineyard – which saw smaller, more concentrated berries with more pronounced acidity.

Like the Merlot, the grapes were sorted at the winery, before manual destemming using homemade wooden destemming boards. The grapes began fermentation anaerobically for three days in plastic tanks, before starting twice a day pumpovers before giving way to twice a day punchdowns. After 19 days on the skins, the berries underwent a half day pressing in a manual vertical basket press. The wine then aged for 10 months in used barrels. 25ppm of sulphur was added at bottling, and the wines were left unfinned and unfiltered.

This lighter bodied cab franc shows beautiful red fruit, with violets, tree bark, and a dusty meatiness with just a faint hint of pyrazine. As it opens up, gentle floral scents of fresh roses start to appear, adding a lovely elegance. The wine feels smooth and light, with soft tannins that balance the bright red fruit flavors perfectly. It's easygoing and refreshing but still has enough depth to keep things interesting. Overall, it's a really approachable and charming Cabernet Franc that captures the unique Nagano terroir with a natural, laid-back style—perfect for casual sipping or pairing with a variety of dishes.



PRODUCER

Domaine Nakajima  
*Tomi, Nagano Prefecture*

