



Julien Fayard Wines

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Julien Fayard Wines. Julien was born in Saint-Étienne in France; he has a well rounded and diverse background in wine making. His father grew grapes and their family has been involved in the wine business in France for several generations. Julien made his first wine at age 16 and continued his education by working in Provence, the Loire Valley and Bordeaux (Château Lafite-Rothschild and Château Smith Haut Lafitte – incidentally both wineries have strong connections through ownership to the Napa Valley).



Julien first visited California in 2000, returned to France and then in 2003 came back to the Napa Valley for a short while working as a harvest intern at Quintessa. It was at Quintessa where he first met winemaker Philippe Melka. Julien later worked with Melka at Atelier Melka for 8 years and oversaw a number of projects including winery development, vineyard sites and custom crush operations and worked with notables such as Lail, Gemstone and Dalla Valle Vineyards.



Julien released his first wine in the Napa Valley in 2007, a rosé bottled under the brand Azur. Arguably, the Azur rosé set a new standard of quality for California producers of wines of this style. From the beginning the winemaking followed the *Methode Provencale* process (direct pressing or maceration and bleeding of the juice) along with a number of other steps similar to how this wine is made in Côtes de Provence, France, including no malolactic fermentation. And in addition, what is highly unusual in the Napa Valley, the grapes purchased for this wine were grown specifically for the purpose of making a rosé wine and were always harvested on the earlier side – highlighting the acidity and liveliness of the fruit.



In 2012 a group of partners including Julien purchased a 12 acre site in Coombsville of which 4.5 acres were already planted to vine. Now called Covert Estate, part of the property is a knoll which boasts excellent views

overlooking much of Coombsville and to the south including the San Pablo Bay in the distance. This knoll has proved useful in that geographically it provided the footprint for their wine cave. The 12,000 square foot cave was completed in late 2015 in time for that years' harvest and serves as home to a number of small brands that Julien and his team make wine for.

Select Wines

The Julien Fayard wines are highly personal, after all it *is* his name on the label. He sources fruit from premium vineyards based on both quality of site and relationships he has developed with growers over the years. The first vintage of Julien Fayard was in 2016.

The 2019 Julien Fayard McGah Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc shows medium gold in color with some citrus influence on the bouquet including pomelo, grapefruit and hints of freshly cut grass. On the palate there is a perceived sweetness of both oak and ripeness of fruit. The texture is rounded and slightly creamy but not viscous and is complemented nicely by the wine's acidity. This is a very thoughtfully made wine with layers and complexity. Offers flavors of honeycomb and lemon zest. Lingers with a touch of desert spices on the finish. This wine was fermented in oak barrel and aged sur lies with battonage.

Sauvignon Blanc is usually not associated with aging much past its purchase date but Julien crafts his Sauvignon Blancs to age some years. The 2016 Julien Fayard McGah Vineyard Sauvignon Blanc is medium yellow in the glass; shows aromas of pineapple, hazelnut, honeycomb, and a vanilla sweetness deeper in the aromatics. This wine also offers some floral notes including citrus and honeysuckle. Rounded but not necessarily creamy, its texture is nicely balanced with the acidity. Showcases a lively finish (no New Zealand high acid tartness here) with lingering flavors of red apple, mandarin and a hint of lime. Very balanced. Has held up nicely nearly 5 years post harvest date.

Departing from his normal varietal focus, is the Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir; the vineyard site is located in the hills west of Sebastopol (Sonoma Coast) in neighboring Sonoma County. The 2016 Julien Fayard Platt Vineyard Pinot Noir was fermented stemless; it shows a floral element but also a darker note on the bouquet, including clove and cedar. Becomes slightly more savory as the wine continues to open. Very bright – its redfruit tones are immediately evident on the palate with both red cherry, cranberry and hints of rhubarb.

Finishes supple. Coming from a perspective on making red wines throughout his career Julien was vigilant on how he made this wine, carefully monitoring extraction during the winemaking even down to the diameter of hoses used.

What is a classic Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon? This question Julien has posed to himself and to others over the years. And perhaps it is a question one can't quite answer due to a myriad of factors which are constantly evolving. But for Julien wines must show a freshness, a stability over time in the bottle, showcasing Napa Valley fruit – its ripeness and texture, but at the same time influenced by his French persuasion.

The 2018 Julien Fayard Cabernet Sauvignon Classic was crafted with more valley floor fruit than the Reserve. This wine shows an elegance including a floral note on the bouquet (violets), blueberry, blackberry, plum and as the wine opens a note of cedar and baking spices. A hallmark of this wine is its brightness

across the palate – a nice interplay of mostly red and darker fruits with great acidity. Lingers with plum and blackberry. The tannins showed a bit tight at the time of our tasting, present and noticeable with a medium grip. Would love to try this in another 10 years.

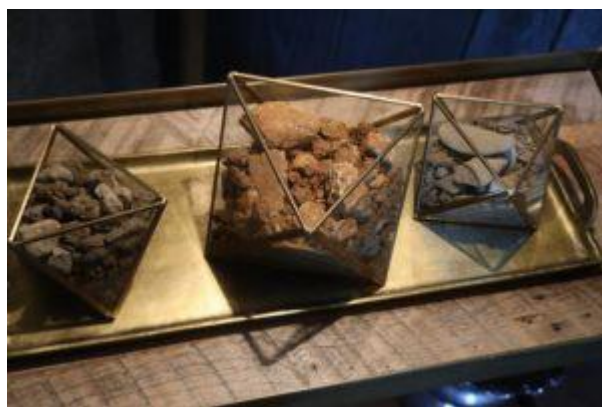
The 2018 Julien Fayard Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve offers enticing aromas of chocolate, dust, mocha and plenty of black fruit. Adding some aromatic intrigue is a hint of shishito pepper as the wine opens further and there is even a thread of red fruit showing deeper into the aromatics. Generous amounts of dark fruit show across the palate with a darker finish and notes of dried tobacco leaf. Dense, with earthy, chalky and somewhat dry tannins the finish is complemented by dark cedar. Lingers for some time with its powerful grip of structure and fruit.

Both the Classic and the Reserve wines have their own style and place; Julien strives for consistency each year while making these two wines. And both wines are offered at a very reasonable price to quality ratio. It is well worth your time to seek out both of these.

The 2016 Julien Fayard Martinez Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon (clone 4 and clone 7 from a single block within the vineyard) is perched on slopes overlooking the Napa Valley on Pritchard Hill not far from Nine Suns Winery. The hallmark profiles of this vineyard are its soil depth with both clay and red iron rich earth. This wine is noticeably inky dark in color; one of the hallmarks of Julien's wines are great phenolics and extraction. Offers pretty aromatics including blackberry, boysenberry and a subtle oak influence sweetness. The oak nicely complements the aromatics. And as it breathes further, shows aromas of Graham Cracker and clove. This wine is powerfully built and needs some time to open, but when it does, the integration of all of its components show nicely. Lingers with somewhat dense, chewy and chalky tannins which are rounded in feel initially but soon becomes more complex, cedar notes and tobacco leaf along with a lingering brightness of fruit (red berries). Tasted nearly 5 years post vintage date, this wine has loads of life left.

Sleeping Lady Vineyard is located on the valley floor on the west side of Highway 29 a few minutes south of Yountville and is owned in a partnership between the Bettinelli family, long time farmers in the Napa Valley and Brion and Ronda Wise (BRION, B Wise wineries). The vines were originally planted by Larry Bettinelli (Napa Valley Grower of the Year in 2016). The vineyard is named after a feature in the foothills of the Mayacamas mountains to the west of the property that somewhat resembles a sleeping lady. We have been told it is easier to see this feature from the air than from the ground.

The entire property is 110 acres with 52 planted to vines; the vineyard is primarily planted to Cabernet Sauvignon (95%) with the remainder to Cabernet Franc. The vines grow in alluvial deposits with gravel located underneath topsoil. A number of premium boutique producers source grapes from this vineyard including Julien who first discovered the site years back when he decided to purchase some of their grapes.



One of the prime parts of this vineyard is on its western sides on slightly sloped soils right next to the edge of the Mayacamas mountains.

The 2016 Julien Fayard Sleeping Lady Cabernet Sauvignon is dark ruby in color; offers fresh and lively darker fruit aromatics including notes of black fig, blackberry and a floral note (lavender). On the palate, shows a density of dark fruit and structure. Juicy, layered, and complex with plenty of fruit. This wine is still in the throes of youth – excitable and bursting with energy, it finishes with robust and gripping tannins. Offers plenty of power yet with a simultaneous freshness, both elements of an intriguing wine.

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The label design is simple yet eye catching. Based in Var, France, Julien’s cousin Lionel and his wife Carine operate Fayard Design. They creatively combined both visual elegance with representation of vineyard sites. Each label is different – all with Google maps faded in the background with the source vineyard blocks highlighted in gold.

Just Pink!

With Julien’s background working with rosé – it was only a matter of time before he created another rosé brand. Bottled primarily for distribution, production is around 2,000 cases annually.

The 2020 Just Pink! Rosé from California is pale to medium copper in color; the aromatics are fresh with plenty of fruit including raspberry and wild strawberries. Also a citrus note, a lime and lemon zesty character which carries onto the palate. A slight creaminess. A liveliness runs from the entry to the finish, even as the wine starts to warm up to room temperature. Made to be enjoyed by itself or perhaps paired with some lighter seafood dishes – we are thinking best paired with some sashimi in the Roppongi Hills of Tokyo, or Thai freshwater prawns with some spicy nam prik, enjoyed on some rooftop in Bangkok watching the sunset over the skyline and the glistening Chao Phraya River.



Overdelivers for the price; 1% of the total gross profits from sales of this wine are contributed to an organization called 1% For The Planet – funds from businesses who participate in this are distributed to organizations protecting the environment worldwide. Also sold as kegs for serious rosé consumer enthusiasts, and or to restaurants.

The Green Room

In early 2019, Julien opened The Green Room in an industrial park located just south of the city of Napa. This tasting space was formerly occupied by Holman Cellars and with a few updates, is now used for private tastings by appointment. And the winery portion of the space is where the Julien Fayard brand is also produced along with wines for select clients and some of his other own brands.



The idea behind the name is two-fold, Green Room is generally referred to as a room where actors or others about to go on live television or other performances, take time to relax and calm the nerves and it is also a surfing slang, referring to barreling a wave or getting time inside the hollow of a wave as it curls over before cresting. Appropriately named, the room is a calm space, intimate in size, it sits just outside the winery but close enough so that visitors can watch the action through the adjoining windows. And the name ties into one of Julien's other passions, surfing – one cannot miss seeing the variety of surfboards that line the ceiling of the winery.



Each wine only has a production of maximum of around 300 cases. The wines have limited distribution in Arizona, California, Illinois, Florida and Texas. For more information or to join the mailing list, visit: www.fayardwines.com

