



A Very Good Year: The Journey of a California Wine from Vine to Table

Mike Weiss

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A Captivating, Behind-the-Scenes Look at the Making of a Premium California Wine

Situated amidst the lush soils of Sonoma County in the heart of California's wine country, the Ferrari-Carano Vineyards produce some of the best-loved wines in America. Founded by casino mogul Don Carano and his wife Rhonda just over twenty years ago, the winemaker has won praise from consumers and connoisseurs alike for its affordably priced premium bottles, particularly its Fumé Blanc. In *A Very Good Year*, award-winning journalist Mike Weiss goes behind the scenes at this renowned winemaker to tell the story of how a bottle of this wine is created, from the first grapes picked by the hands of Mexican migrant workers to the vintage's initial public tasting at the Four Seasons in New York.

Weiss's intimate look at the 2002 Fumé Blanc reveals the delicate interaction between water, sunlight, soil, and climate that produces grapes with the precise flavors sought by its growers—as well as explaining how a winemaker's decisions during the fermenting processes can bring out subtle changes in the distinctive flavors, such as the grassy melon bouquet that is the hallmark of this vintage. Weiss also looks at how "The Story" of a winery drives its marketing identity, is reflected in such decisions as the shape of its bottle and the style of its label, and can often decide the crucial difference of whether it is included on the lists of the country's best white-tablecloth restaurants. Along the way, *A Very Good Year* brings to life the colorful characters behind Ferrari-Carano: an obsessive fourth-generation vineyard manager who can predict an early spring based on the behavior of local bass; a star winemaker who must decide the precise blending methods based on elaborate chemistry and a supposition of what reviewers want to taste; the effusive sales and marketing guru behind the powerful brand; and at the center of it all is Don Carano, a successful entrepreneur who has entered the wine business not as a millionaire dilettante but as an ambitious winemaker with an eye toward creating a vintage that will garner international acclaim.

Insightful and intoxicating, *A Very Good Year* is a delight to be savored by the oenophile and novice alike.

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