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The Accidental Legacy of Scarecrow Wine

How Neglect, Hollywood Glamour, and a Record-Breaking Auction Shaped a Napa Valley Icon

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Scarecrow Estate

In the lush landscapes of Napa Valley, amidst a tapestry of vineyards and a history rich in viticulture, lies a story as captivating as the wine it produces. Scarecrow, a name synonymous with excellence in the world of Cabernet Sauvignon, presents a tale that intertwines the unlikely elements of accidental discovery, Hollywood grandeur, and viticultural serendipity.

Founded on the oldest Cabernet Sauvignon vines in North America, planted in 1945, Scarecrow has risen to prominence as one of the most sought-after wines in the United States. This esteemed wine owes its existence to a series of seemingly unrelated events and decisions, a narrative that underscores the unpredictable nature of both the

wine industry and life itself.

The story of Scarecrow begins with Napa Valley's premier vintner in the mid-20th century, who laid the foundation for what would become a viticultural treasure. However, the true twist in Scarecrow's history is its survival through decades of neglect. Owned for many years by individuals outside the wine industry, including Hollywood impresario JJ Cohn, the vineyard was more of a scenic backdrop than an agricultural endeavor. The property, often caught in legal and familial disputes, seemed destined for a different fate, far removed from the world of fine wine.

Ironically, it was this very neglect that played a crucial role in the vineyard's success. A business-minded vintner might have replanted these vines several times over, yet they were left to grow, undisturbed and untampered. The roots, deeply entrenched and undisturbed, grew strong and resilient, a characteristic that would become a defining trait of Scarecrow wine.

It was under the stewardship of Bret Lopez, JJ Cohn's grandson, that Scarecrow's wine-making potential was realized. Faced with financial pressures and the looming burden of property taxes, Lopez, alongside his wife Mimi DeBlasio, embarked on a journey to transform these historic vines into a source of income. Their decision to create a single-block wine from what they affectionately termed the "Old Man Vines" marked the beginning of Scarecrow's ascent to wine-making fame.

Scarecrow's reputation was cemented in 2014 when a special cuvée achieved a record-breaking price of $4333 per bottle at the Premiere Napa Valley trade auction, a testament to the wine's extraordinary quality and the high esteem in which it is held. This accolade is not only a reflection of the wine's excellence but also of its unique story - a story of accidental success, Hollywood connections, and a steadfast commitment to preserving a piece of Napa Valley's history.

Today, the Scarecrow vineyard, nestled against Mount Veeder, offers a serene and picturesque retreat from the bustling activity of State Route 29, Napa's main thoroughfare. The property, with its historic 173-year-old home, is as much a testament to the region's history as it is to the wine it produces. Lopez and DeBlasio, both artists by profession, have infused their passion for creativity and art into every aspect of the

Scarecrow experience, from the cultivation of the vine to the wine's presentation.