



# VOLKER EISELE

FAMILY ESTATE

*est. 1974*

## GREEN PRACTICES

When Volker and Liesel purchased the vineyard in 1974, they never had a conversation about organic farming. They thought it was simply common sense. They had young children and a vineyard crew that they did not want exposed to harmful chemicals. They realized very early on that in order to farm organically, one has to think about what is growing on the property around the vineyard. Are the plants invasive? Are the plants native? What type of animal, insect or bird do these plants attract? When they purchased the property, the two creeks surrounding our vineyard were clear cut and overgrown with European Blackberry, which is not native, it is invasive, and it attracts pests to the vineyard. Years were spent pulling out the European Blackberry thus allowing the native trees and bushes to regrow in these creek beds surrounding the vineyard. The native environment attracted the native animals and birds that help keep insect and rodent populations under control within the vineyard.

I asked Volker once, very innocently, why he does not have owl houses, and he said to me, “Catherine, look around, we do not need them”. These are the following steps we take to ensure the integrity of our shared environment.



We maintain a balanced environment and ecosystem on the property through the following steps:

- Removal of all invasive plants allowing only native plants to grow.
- Seasonal cover crop of nitrogen fixers, clover, legumes, and native grasses to prevent erosion during the rainy season and a way to put organic matter back into the soil during spring disking.
- Permanent cover crops in steeper areas of the vineyard to prevent erosion and protect the soil.
- Treading lightly within the vineyard to avoid unnecessary root compaction – farming is done by hand: pruning, suckering, canopy management, harvest.
- Hoe plowing is used for less intrusive weed control.
- The use of snake friendly farming helps keep rodents under control in the vineyard.

**Farming Type** – The foundation for our green farming is the organic certification; CCOF, CDFA, Napa Green Certified Land and Fish Friendly Farming. Since 1974 we have farmed organically. There are no chemicals of any kind used on our land. During the last forty plus years we have eliminated nearly all invasive plants. That plus the restoration of the riparian corridors have created the necessary habitat for the native species, thereby restoring the land for all animals. The biological balance we have achieved makes organic farming easy and leads to stronger, healthier vines – and more complex, expressive fruit.

