



BELL

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Merlot 2003 Napa Valley

Vineyard

Our Merlot is made from Merlot grapes grown on the SpanosBerberian Vineyard in Yountville, Clone 6 Cabernet sauvignon grown on the Georges III vineyard in Rutherford, and Syrah from the Massa Ranch in Yountville. Yountville benefits from the early receding fog resulting in more sunlight and warmer daytime temperatures. These warm summer daytime temperatures and cool evenings regions result in grapes with bright fruit flavors and excellent natural acidity. The Clone 6 Cabernet from Rutherford has the soft, elegant tannins one expects from the area.

Vintage Notes

The 2003 vintage followed an extremely challenging, yet rewarding growing season. The wettest April on record and late season, September heat spikes contributed to lower overall yields, but produced a vintage with high quality, great color concentration, and intensity of flavors. A long, cool summer allowed fruit flavors to evolve ahead of sugar accumulation, and we harvested beautifully mature fruit in mid-September.

Vinification

Merlot grapes were hand-harvested and gently crushed to minimize crushing of berries and maximize fruit character. We fermented at 80 degrees-F with a Bordeaux yeast strain, and extracted color utilizing gentle irrigation over the skins. Following fermentation the wine underwent malo-lactic fermentation and was then racked to barrel. The wine was barrel aged in a combination of French and American oak barrels for 17 months. The wine was not fined and received one filtration prior to bottling.

Tasting Notes

Our Merlot, deep garnet in color, has rich black cherry fruit aromas, with hints of eucalyptus and oak. Addition of Syrah brings depth of fruit to the nose and palate, while the addition of Clone 6 Cabernet sauvignon adds structure to the finish. Soft tannins balance well with good fruit acidity and concentrated fruit flavors to yield a wine that will develop well with several years of aging. A rich, concentrated, full-bodied Merlot with a lingering finish and supple mouthfeel.

Technical Analysis:

Varietal:	Merlot (80%), Cabernet sauvignon (14%) Syrah (6%)
Appellation:	Napa Valley
Harvest Sugar	24.8 Brix
Harvest Acid	0.44 gm/100ml
Total Acid	0.65 gm/100ml
pH	3.46
Alcohol	14.4%
Aging	17 months in oak, 55% new barrels 83% French, 17% American
Bottle Date	May 2005
Production	742 cases

