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Merlot 2004 Napa Valley

Vineyard

This wine is produced from Merlot grapes grown on the Spanos-Berberian Vineyard in Yountville and Clone 6 Cabernet sauvignon grown on the Georges III vineyard in Rutherford. 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 2004 vintage yielded fruit bearing the imprint of an early spring, a slow and steady ripening period that ended with a fast, hot finish several weeks ahead of traditional harvest timelines. Warm, consistent summer weather was bracketed by an early spring bud break, and several late summer hot spells, creating growing conditions that allowed for one of the earliest harvests in almost a decade. Overall yields were lower than expected and the resulting wines show inky color, ripe fruit flavors and great natural acidity.

Vinification

Merlot grapes were hand-harvested and gently crushed to minimize crushing of berries and maximize fruit character. We fermented at 85 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 18 months, and was blended with the Clone 6 just prior to bottling. The wine was not fined and received a screen filtration prior to bottling.

Tasting Notes

Our Merlot, deep garnet in color, has rich black cherry fruit aromas, with hints of eucalyptus and oak. The addition of Clone 6 Cabernet sauvignon adds structure to the finish, giving the wine a Cabernet-like mouthfeel. 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 (87%) Cabernet sauvignon, Clone 6 (13%)
Appellation:	Napa Valley
Harvest Sugar	26.5 Brix
Harvest Acid	0.55 gm/100ml
Total Acid	0.61 gm/100ml
pH	3.61
Alcohol	15.0%
Aging	18 months in oak, 33% new barrels 65% French, 35% American
Bottle Date	June 2006
Production	818 cases

