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Merlot 2005 Napa Valley

Vineyard

This wine is produced from Merlot grapes grown on the Spanos-Berberian and Ruhl Vineyards in Yountville, Syrah and Petit verdot from the Massa Ranch in Yountville, and Clone 6 Cabernet sauvignon from 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 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 2005 growing season began with wet weather, followed by a dry period in March. Rainfall continued well into spring with later than usual bloom and set and we experienced unseasonable rain into June. The cool weather continued into summer with few heat spikes. As September approached we were concerned that the larger than normal crop would not mature as fog prevailed well into the harvest season, keeping daytime temperatures cool. The long cool growing season gave us excellent wines with beautiful structure, great color and high 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 20 months, and was blended with the Syrah, Petit verdot and 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 Petit verdot and Clone 6 Cabernet sauvignon adds structure to the wine, giving a Cabernet-like mouthfeel, while the Syrah adds sweet fruit 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 (81%), Syrah (9%), Cabernet sauvignon (8%), Petit Verdot (2%)
Appellation:	Napa Valley
Harvest Sugar	24.9 Brix
Harvest Acid	0.50 gm/100ml
Total Acid	0.64 gm/100ml
pH	3.56
Alcohol	14.4%
Aging	20 months in oak, 25% new barrels, 72% French, 28% American
Bottle Date	July 2007
Production	1215 cases

