



**BELL**

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**Merlot 2005**  
**Yountville**  
**Napa Valley**  
**Estate Grown**

### Vineyard

Our Merlot grapes are estate grown on the winery's SpanosBerberian Estate Vineyard in Yountville approximately one mile south of the Yountville Hills. Yountville enjoys the early morning fog and cool growing conditions of the maritime influenced southern Napa Valley, whilst the early receding fog gives us more sunlight and warmer daytime temperatures than the more southerly Carneros region. Our warm summer daytime temperatures and cool evenings result in grapes with rich fruit flavors and an excellent acid balance.

### 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 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 (65%) and American (35%) oak barrels, 50% of which were new, for 18 months. The wine was not fined and received one light filtration prior to bottling.

### Tasting Notes

Our Merlot, deep garnet in color, has rich black cherry fruit aromas, with hints of eucalyptus and oak. Diligent canopy management during the summer to expose the fruit to dappled sunlight, and severe crop thinning prior to harvest to ensure evenly mature fruit and to balance the crop, yields a rich, full-bodied wine with a lovely structure. Elegant tannins balance well with good fruit acidity, concentrated fruit flavors and sweet vanilla oak flavors to yield a wine that will develop well with several years of aging. A rich, concentrated "Cabernet drinkers" Merlot with a layered, lingering finish and supple mouthfeel.

### Technical Analysis:

Varietal:	Merlot (98%) Cabernet sauvignon (2%)
Appellation:	Yountville, Napa Valley
Harvest Sugar	24 Brix
Harvest Acid	0.54 gm/100ml
Total Acid	0.63 gm/100ml
pH	3.59
Alcohol	13.7%
Aging	18 months in oak, 50% new barrels 65% French, 35% American
Bottle Date	August 2007
Production	248 cases

