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Claret 2006 Napa Valley

What is Claret?

Claret was first used in popular English literature sometime before 1350. Claret, or Bordeaux as it is sometimes called, is a red wine, not too dark in color with a medium body, good fruit flavor and bouquet.

By the reign of Edward III (1327-1377) the trade in French wine had reached amazing proportions. Ships of that time were rated at the number of tonnes (252 gallon casks of wine) they could carry. The wine fleet would sail for France in late autumn, returning before Christmas with "new wine". They would sail again after Easter in the spring, and return with "rack wine" of the same vintage. In 1372, the wine fleet consisted of some 200 ships, with average tonnage well over 50 tonnes per ship, for a total cargo of over 3 million gallons of wine that year. The English even had their own name for much of this wine. The French used the term claret to refer to the light red wine of Bordeaux, before it was blended with heavier, darker red wine from elsewhere in France. It was this that the English came to call Claret. Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400) was well acquainted with the many varieties of wine available in London, including wines of Bordeaux. He used the word Claret in The Merchants Tale of Canterbury Tales.

The Wine

Our Napa Valley Claret is a blend created from select barrel lots of wine drawn from our Napa Cabernet blend. These lots display lively fruit aromas and flavors with a soft, supple tannin structure. Created in response to requests from winery guests to produce a cabernet that did not "bite," the addition of Syrah softens the tannins on the palate and adds fruit to the finish. This makes this wine approachable at an earlier age, while still having a layered tannin structure that will allow the wine to develop for several years.

Vintage Notes

The 2006 growing season began with heavy rains and floods around the Napa Valley. Rainfall continued well into spring with later than usual bloom and set in June. A record heat wave in mid-July failed to damage vines as they were slightly behind in the cycle. Normal, mild weather returned in August and continued, allowing for paced ripening. Cold weather with rain in October slowed sugar accumulation while allowing extended hang time, which enhances maturity and optimal development of flavors. Overall, the season was an outstanding year and has produced wines with beautiful structure, great color, and high natural acidity.

Tasting Notes

Deep ruby in color, with rich fruit aromas - including licorice, plum and violets – on the nose. In the mouth it is lively and bright, with toasty oak flavors, supported by supple, elegant tannins.

Technical Analysis

Varietal:	Cabernet Sauvignon (77%), Syrah (7%), Petit verdot (6%), Merlot (5%), Cabernet franc (3%) Malbec (2%)
Appellation:	Napa Valley (100%)
Total Acid	0.61 gm/100ml
pH	3.72
Aging	21 months, 79% French, 18% American, 3% Hungarian
Alcohol	14.5%
Bottle Date	July 2008
Production	2045 cases

