

TEXTBOOK



2017 MERLOT NAPA VALLEY

• H I G H L I G H T S •

Superb sites in the renown Napa Valley AVA highlight the world-class pedigree of this release. Classic Bordelaise winemaking (handwork in Napa Valley vineyard, modest use of new French oak barrels, egg-white fining) partnered with a touch of Cabernet Sauvignon provides a richly textured and balanced result.

• V I N T A G E •

Vintage 2017 was a superb vintage with outstanding weather all season. Yes there was some isolated hail and two heat spikes, but overall the season was excellent for premium viticulture. Wildfires in October posed challenges to late-season grapes such as Syrah and Zinfandel but all our Merlot grapes had already been picked. Our 2017 Napa Valley Merlot yields were about average and the tiny berries were deeply colored, richly textured and showed great promise.

• V I N E Y A R D S •

Originally brought to the United States in the 1850's from Pomerol by Antoine Delmas, Merlot is, at its best, a textured wine capable of great power and elegance. Our Merlot comes from two blocks located within the famed Napa Valley AVA. Each site brings unique attributes (both gravelly soils and loamy soils) that add complexity. The Oak Knoll lot brings backbone, sweet red fruit and tannins. The Oakville District Merlot lot showcases color and deeply textured, high-quality tannins. The small Cabernet Sauvignon fraction adds power and "grip". Together, they all complete a wonderful package. Exemplary sustainable farming practices are employed in these sites and after veraison unevenly ripened bunches were hand-culled which reduced yield to about 6 pounds per vine (@ 3.1 tons/acre).

• W I N E M A K I N G •

Hand-picked clusters were field sorted, and then hand-sorted at an average of 23.9 Brix. Cold soaking for three days in open-top temperature-controlled fermenters developed color and flavor in the absence of alcohol. Fermentation began spontaneously with prevailing yeasts and a daily punch down kept the cap immersed in must, extracting superb flavor and structure. After we added cultured yeasts, fermentation completed and was followed by eighteen days on the skins. The must was gently pressed into French oak barriques where it slowly completed ML fermentation. The press fraction was not used. Barrels were of the highest quality; 100% French, 33% new, two-year air-dried, medium-plus toast and handbent by Cadus and Francois Freres in central France. Twelve months barrel maturation with two rackings and one egg white fining integrated flavors and developed a silky mouth-feel. Our Merlot is handmade and may throw a harmless deposit.

• W I N E F A C T S •

Regional Composition: 100% Napa Valley (90% Oak Knoll, 10% Oakville District)

Varietal Composition: 90% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon

pH: 3.65 Alcohol: 13.3%

