



BELL

WINE CELLARS

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Merlot 1997
Aleta's Vineyard
Yountville, Napa Valley

Established in 1991, Bell Wine Cellars is a small family owned winery dedicated to producing hand crafted Napa Valley wines. Our Merlot grapes are estate grown on the winery's vineyard in Yountville approximately one mile south of the Yountville Hills. Yountville is an ideal area for both Chardonnay and Merlot. The Yountville area enjoys the early morning fog and cool growing conditions of the maritime influenced southern Napa Valley, whilst the early receding fog gives us slightly longer sunlight and warmer daytime temperatures than the Carneros region directly to our south. Enjoying the best of both microclimates, our warm summer daytime temperatures and cool evenings result in grapes with rich fruit flavors combined with an excellent acid balance.

Vinification

Merlot grapes were hand-harvested and delivered to the winery in small picking boxes to minimize fruit damage. The grapes were 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 and American oak barrels for 30 months. The wine was not fined and received one filtration prior to bottling. The resulting blend received six months of bottle age prior to release.

Tasting Notes

Our Merlot, deep garnet in color, has rich black cherry fruit aromas, with hints of eucalyptus and oak. 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.

Technical Analysis:

Varietal:	Merlot, 100%;
Source:	Yountville,
Harvest Sugar	23.5 Brix
Harvest Acid	0.53 gm/100ml
Total Acid	0.68 gm/100ml
pH	3.64
Alcohol	13.4%
Aging	30 months in oak
Bottle Date	June 16, 2000
Production	100 cases

