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Claret 2003 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.

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. The addition of Syrah makes this wine approachable at an earlier age, while still having a tannin structure that will allow the wine to develop for several years.

Vintage Notes

The 2003 vintage followed an extremely challenging, yet rewarding growing season. The wettest April on record and late season, September heat spikes contributed to lower overall yields, but produced a vintage with high quality, great color concentration, and intensity of flavors. A long, cool summer allowed fruit flavors to evolve ahead of sugar accumulation, and we harvested beautifully mature fruit in mid-September.

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 (83%) Cabernet franc (5%) Merlot (3%) Petite verdot (1%) Syrah (8%)
Appellation:	Napa Valley (100%)
Total Acid	0.64 gm/100ml
pH	3.64
Alcohol	14.4%
Aging	18 months in French Oak
Bottle Date	May 2005
Production	1,699 cases

