



# BELL

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## Merlot 2004 Yountville Napa Valley

### Vineyard

Our Merlot grapes are estate grown on the winery's SpanosBerberian 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 2004 vintage yielded fruit bearing the imprint of an early spring, a slow and steady ripening period that ended with a fast, hot finish several weeks ahead of traditional harvest timelines. Warm, consistent summer weather was bracketed by an early spring bud break, and several late summer hot spells, creating growing conditions that allowed for one of the earliest harvests in almost a decade. Overall yields were lower than expected and the resulting wines show inky color, ripe fruit flavors and great 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 and American oak barrels 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 and severe crop thinning prior to harvest 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 (100%)
Appellation:	Yountville, Napa Valley
Harvest Sugar	26.2 Brix
Harvest Acid	0.59 gm/100ml
Total Acid	0.58 gm/100ml
pH	3.69
Alcohol	15.0%
Aging	18 months in oak, 60% new barrels 70% French, 30% American
Bottle Date	June 2006
Production	250 cases

