



BELL

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Merlot 1999 Aleta's Vineyard Yountville, Napa Valley

Vineyard

Our Merlot grapes are estate grown on the winery's 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 1999 vintage followed a long, cool growing season. Cold temperatures in the spring delayed bud break, and continued cool temperatures through summer delayed veraison and ripening. The long, cool growing season resulted in fruit with excellent color, acidity and fruit flavors. A rain free harvest resulted in some of the finest grapes I have seen in my 22 vintages in Napa.

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 18 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	24.5 Brix
Harvest Acid	0.53 gm/100ml
Total Acid	0.60 gm/100ml
pH	3.56
Alcohol	14.3%
Aging	18 months in oak
Bottle Date	June 2001
Production	168 cases

