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Claret 2004 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. Created in response to requests from winery guests to produce a cabernet that did not "bite", the addition of Syrah softens the tannins on the palate and adds fruit to the finish. This makes this wine approachable at an earlier age, while still having a layered tannin structure that will allow the wine to develop for several years.

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.

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 (89%), Cabernet franc (1%) Merlot (5%), Petit verdot (2%), Syrah (3%)
Appellation:	Napa Valley (100%)
Total Acid	0.63 gm/100ml
pH	3.55
Alcohol	13.5%
Aging	18 months in French Oak
Bottle Date	December 2006
Production	942 cases

