



**BELL**

WINE CELLARS

6200 WASHINGTON STREET

YOUNTVILLE, CA 94599

WINERY 707-944-1673

FAX 707-944-1674

E-MAIL:INFO@BELLWINE.COM

WWW.BELLWINE.COM

**Merlot 2006**  
**Yountville**  
**Napa Valley**  
**Estate Grown**

### Vineyard

Our Merlot grapes are estate grown on the winery's SpanosBerberian Estate 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 2006 growing season began with heavy rains and floods around the Napa Valley. Rainfall continued well into spring with later than usual bloom and set in June. A record heat wave in mid-July failed to damage vines as they were slightly behind in the cycle. Normal, mild weather returned in August and continued, allowing for paced ripening. Cold weather with rain in October slowed sugar accumulation while allowing extended hang time, which enhances maturity and optimal development of flavors. Overall, the season was an outstanding year and has produced wines with beautiful structure, great color, and high 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 (70%) and American (30%) oak barrels, 40% of which were new, for 20 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 to expose the fruit to dappled sunlight, and severe crop thinning prior to harvest to ensure evenly mature fruit and 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 (89%) Cabernet sauvignon (11%)
Appellation:	Yountville, Napa Valley
Harvest Sugar	24.8 Brix
Harvest Acid	0.54 gm/100ml
Total Acid	0.65 gm/100ml
pH	3.57
Alcohol	14.2%
Aging	20 months in oak, 40% new barrels 70% French, 30% American
Bottle Date	July 2008
Production	248 cases

