

2004 Merlot, Livermore Valley



Vintage

Perhaps the warmest Spring in quite some time, 2004 was a unique growing season in California. March came in warm and the season stayed that way. Bud break came early and the vines seemed to develop in an unusually consistent manner. The following months never spiked really but the days were consistently warm and the evenings generally cooled off. We were mesmerized by the excellent weather and the vintage came early. The hang time was similar to prior vintages it somehow seemed shorter and the quality of the fruit ended up being excellent.

Vineyards

Fruit was sourced from our estate vineyard in the Ruby Hills. We are on the top of a gently sloping knoll in South Livermore Valley. Our vineyard is influenced by the breezes that come from the Vallecitos to the southwest and keep our growing season long.

Winemaking

Hand harvested into small bins early in the morning, the grapes were destemmed to fermentation bins for a three-day, pre-fermentation cold soak. The must was inoculated with a proper yeast and the fermentation was induced. During the fermentation, the temperature was regulated by punching the cap down into the wine and allowing the heat to temporarily equilibrate with the juice that will become wine. Letting the temperature run a bit wild can get you more from the grape. Let it go too far and you can end its life early. Fortunately we hit the mark with this vintage and the wine truly expresses the vintage well. The wine was aged in French Oak barrels for 22 months and racked out to blend and then bottle unfiltered and unfined.

Winemaker Notes

This one-hundred percent Merlot is offered as a pure expression of our vineyard's potential. Sourced from our Ruby Hill vineyard, it expresses itself gracefully by showing off the fruit that is characteristic of the variety. The black cherry and vanilla spice blend well together along with rich tannins that linger on forever. This wine holds up to Filet Mignon as well as a chocolate mousse

Analysis:

Composition:	100% Merlot
Alcohol:	14.5%
Production:	57 cases
Bottled:	August 2006
Release:	May 2007

Retail:	\$80
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