

# PICAZO

## 2005 ESTATE MERLOT LIVERMORE VALLEY



### About Picazo

We (Jose and Pam Picazo) launched our winery in 2004 to produce small amounts of handmade Merlot from our 14-acre estate vineyard in the Livermore Valley. Our site is unique. The soils are gravelly and well-draining. The microclimate is cooler than the surrounding valley floor thanks to our elevation, exposure to the elements and increased air circulation. Having sold previous harvests to local vintners, we knew our decade-old vineyard was capable of producing deeply-colored, intensely-aromatic, richly-textured Merlot. To help vinify our wines, we hired Mark Clarin as winemaker. A Livermore native who had previously worked for Wente and Bonny Doon, Mark has a familiarity with the local terroir that is unmatched. While our focus is estate Merlot, we also produce a limited quantity of Napa Cabernet Sauvignon. (First vintage: 2007.)

### Climate

The Livermore Valley offers a rare – at least for California - east-west orientation. This unusual topographical feature acts as a weather conduit to the cold SF Bay 25 miles to the west. During the summer the daytime temperatures normally settle in the mid 80's to low 90's. At night, the hotter Central Valley to the east draws air into the region from the Bay dropping the temperature by as much as 40 degrees. Many mornings the vineyard is covered in thick, moist fog. With a mere 12 inches of rain per year the valley is one of the most arid AVAs in California.

### Vintage

2005 was the bumper crop vintage in California which meant that we needed to thin more than usual. A mild spring led to a warm summer and ideal growing conditions. The annual heat spell occurred mid July and early August which was timed well. Our vineyard was ready to pick on September 22.

### Vineyards

Historically, the Livermore Valley has long been important to California viticulture. Robert Livermore planted the first commercial vines here in the 1840s. The district captured America's first international gold medal for wine in 1889 at the Paris Exposition. Our estate vineyard is planted on a sloping bench of gravelly loam set about 200 feet above the valley floor in the Ruby Hills. Overall vineyard elevations are about 600 feet above sea level at the west end, rising to about 640 feet at the eastern edge of the property. The vines are trained to a vertical shoot positioning trellis with 9' x 6' spacing.

### 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. During the fermentation, the temperature was regulated by punching the cap down into the wine, allowing the heat to equilibrate with the juice. The wine was aged in French Oak barrels for 23 months, blended and bottled.

### Winemaker Notes

Our 2005 Merlot is a pure, unfettered expression of our Livermore Valley estate vineyard. The serious, deep, ruby color offers an initial glimpse of the wine's intensity. The nose is an opulent mix of dark berry, anise and earth. The palate is rich and intense with black cherry, marmalade and spicy oak. The tannins are elegant, smooth and integrated.

### Analysis:

Composition:	100% Merlot
Alcohol:	14.2%
Production:	350 cases
Bottled:	Sept. 2007
Release:	Sept. 2008