

# PICAZO

## 2006 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

2006 opened with a warm spring followed by a fairly warm summer. We had our classic heat spell in July but plenty of cool evenings to extend the ripening season. We made several passes through the vineyard to shoot thin and lateral thin to keep the vineyard balanced. We cluster thinned at the end of veraison and pulled the green fruit leading to a more evenly ripened crop. We picked the North Face separately from the Bench. Our efforts in the vineyards are showing through in the wine.

### 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 tank and bins for a three-day, pre-fermentation cold soak. The bins were a cooler fermentation and the tank much warmer. We pressed off at dryness, settled in tank for a day and racked to barrel. We inoculated for malo-lactic and it was completed by November. We aged our wines in French Oak barrels at approximately 30% new barrel. We blended the two vineyard lots prior to bottling and bottled unfiltered and unfined.

### Winemaker Notes

The wine opens with a deep ruby color. There are essences of spicy clove, anise, coconut and black cherries on the nose. The black cherry comes through in a concentrated wave of flavor along with hints of vanilla, coffee, black raspberry and graphite. The luscious tannins offer great length to the wine. This is a very age worthy wine and will be enjoyed for years to come.

### Analysis:

Composition:	100% Merlot
Alcohol:	14.7%
PH:	3.48
TA:	7 g/L
Production:	363 cases
Bottled:	August 27, 2008
Release:	Fall 2009

**Price: \$80**