

# 2015 Napa Valley MERLOT

Since producing our first vintage of Merlot in 1983, we've been committed to making the best possible expression of the variety. Understanding that site selection and farming are key to exceptional Merlot, we shifted our focus on sourcing with the 2014 vintage to the Napa side of Carneros, which we believe produces consistently high-quality wines from this noble grape.

## VINEYARDS

Our Merlot is grown in estate-owned and grower-partner vineyards on the Napa side of Carneros, where the clay soils are similar to those of Bordeaux's Right Bank. The cool climate allows the thin-skinned grapes to gradually develop flavor and tannin while retaining natural acidity.

## WINEGROWING

2015 brought the earliest harvest in our 38-year history. Yields were down overall, but prolonged warm weather resulted in exceptional fruit quality and richly flavored wines. Sustainable farming practices throughout the growing season were tailored to each block with the assistance of aerial photos produced using NDVI (Normalized Difference Vegetation Index) technology. The fruit was hand-picked at night and sorted in the vineyard.

## WINEMAKING

The grapes were carefully destemmed and optically sorted to ensure only perfect fruit made it into the wine. A cold soak extracted color and flavor. About 25% of the wine was barrel-fermented to provide a richer, more textured palate. The wine was gently basket-pressed before being racked to French oak barrels for aging.

## TASTING NOTES

Aromas of fresh, ripe blueberries, ripe plum and black currant intertwine with notes of cedar, vanilla and pie crust. This medium-bodied wine is plush with flavors of plums, blueberries and figs upfront, leading to juicy red fruit on the midpalate. Delicious now, its depth and structure provide long cellaring potential.

## FOOD PAIRINGS

Our favorite *Joy of Cooking*® pairings\* for this wine include Seared Pork Chops with Mustard Green Chimichurri, Beef Braciolo or Pate de Campagne.



<b>RELEASE DATE</b>	May 2018
<b>APPELLATION</b>	Napa Valley
<b>VARIETAL COMPOSITION</b>	78% Merlot 18% Cabernet Sauvignon 4% Petit Verdot
<b>HARVESTED</b>	Sept. 13–19, 2015

<b>AVERAGE BRIX AT HARVEST</b>	26.5
<b>COOPERAGE</b>	17 months in French oak barrels (30% new)
<b>ALCOHOL</b>	14.5%

*\*Recipes for pairings with a noted page number can be found in the 75th anniversary edition of the Joy of Cooking. Recipes not appearing in the book can be found at [www.JoyofCooking.com](http://www.JoyofCooking.com).*



*The Joy of Wine*

**THE ROMBAUER FAMILY** *Inspired by the wine movement of the 1970s in Napa Valley, Koerner and Joan Rombauer entered the wine business in 1976, then launched Rombauer Vineyards in 1980. As stewards of the land, the Rombauers have strived to produce the best wine an appellation, terroir and climate will achieve. The second and third generations are dedicated to continuing Koerner and Joan's vision.*

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