

2018 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

Heavy rains in February led to a warm summer, which then turned cool in August, resulting in a later harvest than the last few years. What followed was a long warm fall with near perfect growing conditions and extended hang time. In the end, it was one of the longest harvests on record and also above average crop size. 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

Complex aromas of black cherry, ripe plum and mocha intertwine with subtle notes of violet and mint. This medium-bodied wine is bursting with flavors of plums, red currant and figs upfront, leading to juicy red fruit on the midpalate. The soft mid palate finishes with fine, plush tannins highlighted by a bright acidity.

FOOD PAIRINGS

Our favorite *Joy of Cooking*® pairings* for this wine include Seared Duck Breast, Rack of Lamb, and Cornish Game Hens.



RELEASE DATE	December 2020	AVERAGE BRIX AT HARVEST	26.3
APPELLATION	Napa Valley	COOPERAGE	15 months in French oak barrels (40% new)
VARIETAL COMPOSITION	83% Merlot 13% Cabernet Sauvignon 4% Petit Verdot	ALCOHOL	14.8%
HARVESTED	Oct. 6th–Oct. 20th, 2018		

**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.*



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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