



SENSORY EVALUATION:

Appearance: Rich scarlet

Aromas: Pretty berry, sweet cherry, vanilla, and milk chocolate.

Flavors: Soft and seamless, neatly woven with a velvety mouthfeel. Textured and rich, the flavors echo the aromas with sweet berry, vanilla, anise, toffee, and plum. Approachable, inviting, and immensely integrated.

WINEMAKER'S NOTES: At Franciscan Estate, we love Merlot. It is part of our heritage as a key component of our Magnificat. Our Reserve Merlot came out of a desire to highlight some of the best that our Merlot vineyards can produce. Featuring fruit from Oak Knoll, which lends deep plum and cherry fruit, richness and density, while blending in Merlot from Carneros for floral notes, velvety texture, and brightness. We vinify each small parcel of vineyard separately to capture its individual expression, then pair it with a barrel specifically selected for that vineyard's terroir. Throughout the months of aging, we fine-tune the blend to its final assemblage. This wine shows intensity and power in flavor and body, but with a Merlot sensibility—grace and restraint, balance and refinement. —Janet Myers, Winemaker

GROWING SEASON: 2014 was another year of low rainfall and warm temperatures in Napa Valley, which once again resulted in an early harvest with excellent flavor intensity and beautiful ripeness in the fruit. The winter started off very dry with no rain in December, January, or February. In late March and early April, we received a good dose of rain that started the vines growing with ample water in the root zone. Throughout most of the growing season, conditions were textbook normal for fruit set and ripening, which gave us an abundance of high-quality grapes. The first Merlot blocks to be picked were from Oak Knoll, and they reached peak ripeness on September 5. The cooler Carneros region began arriving on September 11. By early October, all of the Merlot was safely in the winery fermenting away.

WINEMAKER: Janet Myers

APPELLATION: Napa Valley

AVERAGE BRIX AT HARVEST: 24°–26°

VARIETAL COMPOSITION:
93% Merlot, 7% Syrah

FERMENTATION: Pre-fermentation cold soak of four days to enhance color and body. Fermentation and maceration averaging 22 days to build structure and integrate mouthfeel.

BARREL AGING: 20 months in small oak barrels; 52% new French oak

COOPERS: François Frères, Boutes, and Damy

pH: 3.63

TA: 5.9g/L

ALCOHOL: 14.5%

CASES PRODUCED: 1,124