



2016 MERLOT NAPA VALLEY

For more than 100 years, Beaulieu Vineyard has been setting the standard for rich, classic Napa Valley wines. Our legacy honors the marriage between state-of-the-art technology and gentle, traditional winemaking methods, a combination that enhances the expression of our remarkable vineyard terroir. From Calistoga in the north to Carneros in the south, our Beaulieu Vineyard Napa Valley wines reflect this region's diverse terroir with classic varietal character.

TASTING NOTES

This 2016 Napa Valley Merlot is one of the best in recent vintages and invites you into the glass with elegant dark aromas of black cherry, ripe plum, cherry compote and toasty brioche pastry. On the palate, there is a broad structure with textured flavors that are plush and full but with grace and elegance interwoven, supported by the fresh acidity. You'll also discover hints of sweet spice, orange rind and wild sage backed up by the dark fruit core. This is a very drinkable, balanced, yet understated Merlot with tremendous length and great purity of dark berry fruit. A year of aging in European oak barrels added hints of sweet oak spices and dark espresso which are evident on the finish.

VINTAGE

The extended drought was beginning to cause real concern as the 2016 growing season kicked off, but some welcomed winter rain hinted at the relief to come. After a relatively dry January we enjoyed significant rainfall in February, along with mild temperatures. Bud break was early, but was slowed by heavy April showers. While still early by historical standards, picking began about a week later than 2015, right around Labor Day, and continued at a leisurely pace, allowing the grapes to reach full flavor maturity. A traditionally sized harvest followed the lighter showing of 2015, and the extended mild season helped to balance the acids and add complexity to the layers of flavors. Considered a perfect harvest and a winemaker's dream vintage, conditions were perfect for producing a Merlot with beautiful fruit as well as tremendous concentration of flavors, highly saturated color, and layers of complexity.

VINEYARD

We sourced the majority of grapes for this wine from Calistoga, Rutherford and the Los Carneros American Viticultural Areas (AVAs) of Napa Valley. The diversity of soils and mesoclimates in these regions, as well as of clones and cultivation techniques, contribute to this wine's layers of flavors. Grapes from our estate vineyards in warmer Calistoga contribute juicy, dark-fruit and chocolate expression, while our vineyards in the cooler Los Carneros give bright berry notes. Rutherford vineyards, near our winery in the center of the valley, added plum while enhancing the wine's silky tannin structure.

WINEMAKING

After the grapes were crushed, we fermented the must in stainless steel tanks until dry. Gentle pump-overs during fermentation extracted flavor, deep color and tannins from the skins. We then pressed and transferred all the wines to small oak barrels coopered with French, Hungarian, and American oak to develop and integrate flavors. Following barrel aging, we blended the Merlot with a small amount of complementary varieties to enhance its structure.

SOURCING

Napa Valley

VARIETAL COMPOSITION

88% Merlot
10% Petite Sirah
2% Syrah

VINIFICATION

Aged 15 months in French, Hungarian and American oak (30% new) barrels

ANALYSIS

Alc: 14.8% TA: 5.8 g/L pH: 3.72