



2014 MERLOT

Grown in the heart of California's Central Coast, our vineyards are greatly influenced by maritime breezes. Warm midday sun and breezy afternoons throughout the growing season provide the perfect arena to produce bright and lush fruit. The majority of our Merlot grapes come from the vineyards located in the El Pomar district of Paso Robles, which is known for its loamy soils and unique microclimate. Similar conditions exist in our Paicines vineyards. The remainder of the fruit comes from cooler vineyard sites in Santa Barbara County.

HARVEST NOTES

Despite the ongoing drought conditions in California, 2014 experienced a relatively normal growing season. With a dry, mild winter, the vines saw early bud break. Spring conditions were warm and windy, resulting in a bit of shatter and light fruit set. Temperatures warmed up in late spring and were consistent through September. This consistency brought an overall balance to the acidity and sugar levels, resulting in high quality fruit, with yields reduced by 20%.

WINEMAKING NOTES

After our Merlot was harvested and crushed, it was fermented in 20-40 ton, closed-top stainless tanks for 10-14 days. Daily pump overs enhanced color and tannin extraction. After fermentation, the wine was transferred to neutral French & American oak barrels and inoculated for malolactic fermentation. After an initial aging period of 8 months, the blend was assembled and put back into 50% new French oak barrels for 2 months. The final blend was cross-flow filtered prior to bottling in mid-August 2015.

TASTING NOTES

The 2014 Liberty School Merlot has a deep opaque ruby-black color. Bright blackberry and blueberry aromas fill the glass with an intriguing note of Rainier cherry alongside lavender, clove and a kiss of vanilla. On the palate, the dark fruit play out in concert with the cherry flavor, while accentuated by sweet vanilla and toasted oak. It's firm yet velvety tannins are balanced by mouthwatering acidity and a long, silky finish.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Varietal breakdown: 100% Merlot

Vintage breakdown: 2014

AVA: Central Coast (52% Paicines, 28% Paso Robles, 20% Santa Ynez Valley)

Oak Program: 8 months in neutral French and American oak,

2 months in 50% New French oak prior to final racking and bottling

Length of Time in Oak: 10 months

Harvest Period: Mid-September to early October 2014

Filtered: Cross-flow

Total Acidity: 0.64g tartaric/100mL

pH: 3.60

Alcohol: 13.9%

