



2005 Merlot Napa Valley

ORIGIN: The grapes for this Merlot came entirely from select vineyards situated in the cool southern end of the Napa Valley. The wine is a traditional Merlot blend, made up of 91 percent Merlot from Beckstoffer's Las Amigas Ranch, which is on the Napa County side of Los Carneros, and 9 percent Cabernet Sauvignon from the Bennett Vineyard, which is nestled in the green rolling hills east of the town of Napa in the Coombsville area.

VINEYARD NOTES: The 2005 growing season was naturally extended, with the weather remaining quite cool all the way through a rather late, almost leisurely harvest. Yields were low and the berry sizes were small, particularly for the Cabernet. Both varieties matured beautifully, with the Merlot being harvested by hand on September 28, and the Cabernet coming in two days later.

WINEMAKING NOTES: The fruit was gently destemmed, leaving many uncrushed berries, and fermented in closed-top fermenters. These were pumped over twice daily during fermentation, and the must was pressed at dryness. The blend was assembled in March of 2006 and returned to French and American oak barrels (40 percent of which were new) for a total of sixteen months of aging. The wine was bottled on March 1, 2007.

TASTING NOTES: This wine displays a very dark, almost opaque ruby-purple color. The nose is awash with ripe black currant, vanilla, and spice box aromas that segue to a full, rich palate offering inviting blackberry jam and bittersweet chocolate layers, along with a hint of espresso. Perhaps the most complex and structured MacRostie Merlot to date, this lush and flavorful wine is enjoyable now, but built for a long life in the bottle.

This vintage produced 1,287 (750 ml) cases.

-----Kevin Holt, January 2006