

FREEMARK ABBEY



NAPA VALLEY

2018  
MERLOT  
*Napa Valley*

**WINEMAKER-** *Kristy Melton*

**WINEMAKER EMERITUS-** *Ted Edwards*

**VINTAGE AND WINEMAKER'S NOTES**

Our Merlot is a great rendition of a Napa Valley blend; sourced from the mountains and the bench land with a touch of Cabernet Sauvignon and Petit Verdot blended in for structure. The wine opens with aromas of black cherry, forest fruits, black pepper, olive and mocha. Flavors on the palate include graphite, plum, cigar box, espresso and fresh cedar. The wine is well structured, and the oak and tannins blend harmoniously for a broad and integrated palate with a long lingering finish.

**PRIMARY VINEYARDS**

Keys — (48%): Located near the town of Angwin, at roughly 1,850 ft. elevation, this Howell Mountain vineyard sits adjacent to the Las Posadas State Forest, well above the marine layer, and with warm afternoon sun exposure. The summer days range from 55 to 90 degrees, with cool nights preserving the acidity. The mountainous soil is predominantly volcanic, shallow with low fertility, and producing merlot that expresses dark fruits like blackberry and dark currant, with a distinct minerality.

Stagecoach Vineyard — Atlas Peak (24%): These grapes were sorted from the Atlas Peak area of the Stagecoach Vineyard, located north east of Napa at approximately 1,500 ft. elevation. Composed of ancient volcanic soils, the vineyard is carved out of rocky terrain, sage brush and chaparral. The grape vines struggle in this environment, creating grapes that are small and very concentrated. The Merlot grapes ripen very evenly, yielding great dark cherry depth with an incredible distinctiveness that can only be derived from the terroir of Stagecoach.

Oakville Vineyard — Oakville (16%): Predominantly a rich clay loam that supports healthy vineyards. The wines express flavors of dark cherry and rhubarb pie.

Red Barn — Rutherford (6%): Located in the heart of the Rutherford Appellation, this vineyard is a mosaic of creek beds. The Napa River and Conn Creek have traversed this vineyard throughout history, leaving gravelly loams and ancient creek beds. The fruit is soft, with cherry, plum, rhubarb and arugula.

**GROWING SEASON NOTES**

Abundant winter rains helped refresh the groundwater and our reservoirs. Bud break was a little late, the vines responded to the water and moderate spring weather with plenty of growth. Good weather prevailed during bloom giving us an even fruit set. The summer was moderate, with plenty of sun during the day and marine influences during the night. The harvest was near ideal with average timing and crop size.

**COMPOSITION:**

80% Merlot,  
14% Cabernet Sauvignon  
6% Petite Verdot

**AGE OF VINES & SOIL TYPE**

Soil range from alluvial sedimentary in Coombsville and Carneros to the mineral volcanic soils of Howell Mtn. The vines range in age from 11 years to 25 years.

**HARVEST DATES AND SUGAR:**

9/25/2018 – 10/6/2018 with a weighted average sugar of 24.3° Brix

**FERMENTATION:**

After a five-day cold soak, the fermentation was in stainless steel tanks at 75°-86° for 10-25 days with skin contact.

**ALCOHOL:** 14.3%    **PH:** 3.66    **ACID:** 0.57g/L

**LIFE SPAN IN PROPER CELLAR:**

8-12 years

**NUMBER OF CASES PRODUCED:**

5,000

**BOTTLED:**

March 2020