

FREEMARK ABBEY



NAPA VALLEY

2021
MERLOT
Napa Valley

WINEMAKER - *Kristy Melton*

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Classic and refined is the approach we take when crafting Merlot. We love varietal expression and this one has it in spades. The nose opens with notes of blueberry, cedar, carob, and baking spices. The palate is lush yet well-structured with flavors of black fruit compote, milk chocolate, oak spice, and cigar box. The tannins are evident but integrated and refined, giving it a long, lingering finish.

PRIMARY AVAs

Keyes (60%) - 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.

Missimer (14%) - Located on the valley floor in the Yountville AVA, this site is near the Napa River with good soil fertility. The Merlot from here is rich and densely textured with notes of blue and black fruit with well-structured tannins.

Buena Tierra (11%) - Located on Orchard Lane in the Oak Knoll AVA, the soil is a loose loam and produces wines that show bright fruit characters with savory undertones.

Benessere (10%) - Situated on the north end of the St. Helena AVA, this warmer location on the valley floor provides fruit with lots of plum and blueberry notes. The gravelly soil leads to lower vigor with great minerality and elegant tannins.

GROWING SEASON NOTES

Vintage 2021 is a story of small but mighty. Drought conditions were prevalent in winter and spring. Temperatures were moderate during spring but began to warm significantly during summer. Flowering led to lighter than usual fruit set with low vine vigor. Warm conditions during ripening led to beautiful fruit flavors and intense color. Harvest started in mid-August with Sauvignon Blanc and carried on at a steady pace through September and October with red varieties. While low in volume, the wines are aromatic, lively and well-structured and we can't wait to share them with you.

COMPOSITION:

94% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon

AGE OF VINES:

Vines vary in age from 6-25 years old.

HARVEST DATES AND SUGAR:

August 27 - October 13, 2023;
25.1° Brix at harvest

FERMENTATION:

After a three-day cold soak, the fermentation was in stainless steel tanks at 85-90F.

BARREL & AGING:

19 months in French Oak, 32% new

ALCOHOL:	PH:	ACID:
14.5%	3.54	6.2g/L

LIFE SPAN IN PROPER CELLAR:

8-12 years

NUMBER OF CASES PRODUCED:

1,300

BOTTLED:

July 19 - 20, 2023