

2006 Merlot Paso Robles

Appellation: Paso Robles
pH: 3.36
Alcohol by Volume: 14.9%
T.A.: .697g/100mL
R.S.: 43mg/100mL
Malic Acid: 12mg/100mL

Produced and Bottled by:
Kenneth Volk Vineyards
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Santa Maria, CA 93454
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In the Vineyard

Our 2006 KVV Merlot is a blend of grapes harvested from two excellent vineyards sites in Paso Robles: the Carmody McKnight Vineyard and the Pomar Junction Vineyard. Both of these vineyards have a well-deserved reputation for fine grape growing. The Carmody McKnight Vineyard and Winery is located along Chimney Rock Road in Paso Robles and is a fence-line neighbor of the Justin Winery. Ken has been privileged to work with fruit from this vineyard for over twenty years. Located within the rain shadow of the Santa Lucia Mountains, this site produces deeply pigmented wines with rich layers of flavor and subtle tannins.

The Pomar Junction Vineyard is located in East Templeton at the intersection of El Pomar and South El Pomar roadways. Located due east of Morro Bay, this vineyard receives onshore airflows that breach the Santa Lucia Mountains through the Toro and Morro Creek drainages. This rolling hillside property contains an abundance of the Linne Calodo soil series, a highly desirable rooting matrix for grape growing. The vineyard is owned and managed by the Merrill family of Mesa Vineyard Management. The Merlot selection planted at the Pomar Junction Vineyard is the INTAV clone 181 which has extremely thick-skinned berries and produces darkly pigmented and aromatic wines.

In the Winery

The fruit from each vineyard was hand-harvested and fermented and held as a separate lot through its cellar life. Each vineyard's fruit was destemmed with minimal crushing into insulated stainless steel tanks with large amounts of dry ice to facilitate rapid cooling of the fruit and to promote several days of cold soak (55-60 degrees) prior to inoculation with cultured yeast. The must was pumped over with a Toad pinwheel irrigator with a Mazzei air Venturi injector to build up available oxygen for yeast cell health and to promote color stability. Following the lag phase of yeast growth the tanks were given multiple fire hose pumpovers daily to promote extraction and the fermentation temperatures were allowed to rise to 82 degrees. Midway through fermentation several "Aussie-style" rack and returns were performed to completely mix up the tank contents. The fire hose pumpovers were stopped and the cap was pinwheel-irrigated twice daily until it reached 2° Brix after which the tanks were pumped over once daily. One of the advantages of insulated fermenting tanks is the ability to retain the warmth of fermentation for post-fermentation maceration which allows for rapid polymerization of tannin, helping the development of a rich mouth feel. After three weeks on its skins the tanks were drained of free run juice twenty-four hours in advance of pressing in our Hypac basket press. Free run and press wine were combined and allowed to settle several days prior to barreling down into an equal mixture of new, two and four-year old French and Hungarian Bordeaux-shaped cooperage. Malolactic fermentation was completed in barrel and the wine was racked once in the spring of 2007. The vineyard lots were aged for 20 months in barrel prior to blending in preparation for bottling. This wine was fined with egg whites to improve clarity and mouth feel.

In the Glass

This bottling expresses the ripeness and intensity of the 2006 vintage. Deeply pigmented, this wine has aromas of ripe plum, cranberry, cherry and mocha. On the palate this wine has rich ripe flavors of blackberry, fig and cherry. This big Merlot is rich without being over-extracted. This wine pairs nicely with grilled and seared meats or rustic pasta dishes, particularly when accented with Herbes de Provence.