



2003 Merlot

Appellation: Paso Robles
87% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Franc

pH: 3.52
Alcohol by Volume: 14.03%
T.A.: 0.61 gr./100 ml.
R.S.: 0.15 gr./100 ml.
Malic Acid: 0.04 gr./L.
Lactic Acid: 0.74 gr./L.

Produced and Bottled by:
Kenneth Volk Vineyards
www.volkwines.com

Distributed by: Wine Warehouse
Release Date: February 1, 2006

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Despite hot, windy conditions during June, little berry shatter occurred and a large set of small berried Merlot clusters occurred in 2003. In mid-July, a first thinning pass was made where fruit was removed from shoots with less than twelve leaves. In late August, during mid-veraison, late set pink clusters were dropped to tighten the range of maturity.

Fruit was hand harvested on September 30th into macro bins and crushed into two ten-ton, open top fermentors. One tank was fermented with Ashmanhausen yeast and the other with D-254. Ashmanhausen yeast has a long lag phase prior to a rapid, vigorous ferment; it produces excellent color as well as enhancing spicy aromatics. The D-254 yeast strain is a strong fermenter that also promotes fruit aromatics and a soft palate structure. Two daily pumpovers were conducted for the first three days, and this was increased to four times daily at peak fermentation. The two lots were pressed together after capfall and settled overnight prior to barreling down.

Fifty percent new Trust International Bordeaux Hungarian oak barrels and 50% two-to-threes-year-old Demptos and Seguin Moreau thin stave Bordeaux Chateau-style barrels were used to age this wine. This wine received two rackings during its 18 months in barrel. Prior to bottling, 13% Cabernet Franc was added to lift the aromatics and firm the structure of this wine.

This dark Merlot has aromas of anise seed, ripe berry, olive, and cigar box. On the palate, this wine is tightly structured with moderately firm, persistent tannins. Enjoy this wine with grilled or lightly smoked foods, barbecued meats and braised root vegetables.