

Proprietor Selected
SPECIAL CUVÉE

Elizabeth Spencer

MERLOT
NAPA VALLEY

Vintage 2006

10 Barrels

Produced & Bottled by Elizabeth Spencer Wines

APPELLATION: NAPA VALLEY
VARIETAL BLEND: 100% MERLOT
WINEMAKER: MATTHEW RORICK
RELEASE DATE: FALL 2008

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Deep ruby in color. Aromas of damson plum, Bing cherry and rich, ripe blackberry are intertwined with enticing hints of spice and cigar box. Opulent from the very first sip, this wine features luscious ripe red fruit which fills the mouth and fleshes out firm tannins on the mid-palate. Broad, full and expansive flavors linger beautifully in the mouth.

WINEMAKING

Upon arrival at the winery, our 2006 Merlot grapes underwent a rigorous hand-sorting of clusters to separate out only the most superlative fruit. We opted for a long, cold soak prior to fermentation in order to extract as much color and flavor as possible from skin contact early on. Allowed to ferment with 'native' yeasts, the must received a combination of pumpovers and punch down treatments of the cap which is the collection of grape solids (including stems, seeds and skins) that float to the top of the tank during fermentation. Once fermentation had completed, the wine was macerated on the skins to increase extract and allow the tannin structure to soften. Aged for 20 months in 100% French oak from select coopers including Taransaud, Sylvain, Darnajou, and Nadalie, this wine was handled as little as possible from fermentation tank to barrel and finally to bottle in order to allow it to continue to deepen in richness and complexity. This Merlot was bottled unfiltered and unfiltered for optimum expression.

VINEYARDS

Our Napa Valley Merlot is sourced from two hillside vineyards in the eastern mountains high above St. Helena in the heart of Napa Valley. Both vineyards are renowned for the power and finesse they contribute to the Bordeaux varieties.

VINTAGE

At the start of the growing season, 2006 appeared to be on the same path as 2005 had been – a wet spring and a cooler than average summer – until midsummer, when a two week heat wave arrived. Thankfully, our Merlot grapes were not yet through veraison - which is the period when grapes stop growing and start to change color - and then the hot weather struck. Because the grapes had not begun to soften, they were not adversely affected by the high temperatures. Eventually the weather cooled significantly and this helped to produce a delicious Merlot, rich in flavor, aromatically complex, and possessed of classic character.

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