



ARTESA
VINEYARDS & WINERY

2012
MERLOT

Limited Release



varietal composition: 98% MERLOT, 2% CABERNET FRANC

appellation: NAPA VALLEY

harvest: OCTOBER 2012

technical data: ALC. 14.5% BY VOL; RS: 0.03%; TA: 7.2 G/L; PH: 3.60

cooperage: AGED 20 MONTHS IN 100% FRENCH OAK (50% NEW)

THE 2012 VINTAGE

The 2012 vintage was an ideal growing season from bud break to harvest. The cold winter delayed bud break briefly until spring temperatures allowed uniform shoots to development. The weather during bloom was ideal for fruit set and a large percentage of flowers developed into berries. During the summer the cycle of warm days and cool nights allowed veraison to progress uniformly and quickly. The consistent temperatures and absence of heat spikes removed the risk of sunburn and allow for even ripening. After the prior two late vintages, growers were grateful to start harvest in late August. With warm sunny days, harvest progressed with a steady flow of high quality fruit being delivered to the winery daily. In October cold rains forced many growers to postpone harvest until the wind could dry out the vineyards. A late heat wave was perfect for finishing up the season.

ABOUT THE VINEYARD

This Merlot was grown in two vineyards located in the southern portion of Napa Valley where relatively cooler temperatures mean grapes hang longer on the vines before reaching maturity. This additional hang time is good for flavor development, but the vineyards require attentive viticulture to ensure the fruit gets just the right amount of sunlight and water. Practices such as morning side leaf removal, which allows the morning sun to penetrate the vine but protects clusters from the harsh afternoon sun, and irrigation control, which helps maintain a healthy canopy of leaves, are crucial to getting our Merlot grapes to optimal ripeness.

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this wine were hand harvested in the early morning by hand and quickly brought to the winery in small bins. The fruit was hand-sorted, all the way down to individual berries that were promptly placed into temperature controlled fermentation tanks where they completed approximately 15 days of fermentation. The wine completed secondary fermentation and was aged for 20 months in a blend of 100% new French Oak barrels. During the final blending process it was decided that small portions of Cabernet Franc would be added to lengthen and soften the tannins giving them a nice velvety texture while adding spice and complexity.

TASTING NOTES

This lovely Napa Valley Merlot demonstrates concentrated fruit aromas of cherry, raspberry and cassis. Similar flavors delight the palate followed by firm structure and complexity. The tannins add depth while the silky texture extends into a long, elegant finish.