

# 2014 Meritage

## Napa Valley



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<b>Varietal Composition</b>	47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Petit Verdot, 25% Malbec, 8% Merlot
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<b>Appellation</b>	Napa Valley
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<b>Harvest</b>	September & October 2014
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<b>Technical Data</b>	ALC: 14.6% by vol.; TA: 6.0 G/L; pH: 3.57
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<b>Cooperage</b>	100% French Oak Barrels (40% New)
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<b>Production</b>	799 Cases
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### The 2014 Vintage

In the beginning of our growing season, the drought was a main concern. The 2013/2014 winter was one of the driest on record in California and rainfall totals in the Napa Valley were approximately half of normal. However, the timing of the late rains through February and April let our vineyard team relax a little as the vines received a much needed drink of water as they were emerging from dormancy and about to begin bud break. This rainfall recharged our soil and provided enough water to fill the reservoirs. Furthermore, the spring was warm allowing us to save water if needed for irrigation rather than using it for frost protection. As summer began, our vineyards already had full canopies and full clusters. Veraison, when the skins of the grapes change color, typically occurs in late July; but this year we saw the changing color occur much sooner. And finally, while the vines used for high-quality wine production generally don't need much water, a benefit of the drought is that berry sizes are typically smaller and have more concentrated flavors, which our winemaker believes contributes to the overall quality of this year's harvest.

### About The Vineyard

For this wine we sourced the majority of the grapes from two vineyards to capture the complexity of these growing regions. The grapes from the mountain vineyards in Atlas Peak, were grown on well drained sites above the fog line. These low-vigor vines grow in soils that drain the spring rains quickly and bear low yields of small berries and bring intense flavor and structure to the wine. The fruit from the other vineyard grows in remarkable conditions for cultivating sitespecific, terroir-driven Cabernet Sauvignon. The berries small and burst with intense flavor and achieve mature phenolic ripeness.

### Winemaking

The grapes for this wine were hand-picked at in the early mornings over several weeks as each varietal and vineyard block achieved ripeness and full flavor development. Each lot was de-stemmed, but not crushed, and placed in small stainless steel tanks for fermentation. Twice daily pumpovers helped to extract color and flavor from the grape skins. The new wine was placed in 100% french oak, with roughly 40% new barrels, where it underwent malolactic fermentation. All components of this wine were racked three times yearly and tasted monthly, kept separate until blending to slowly progress into this unique blend.

### Tasting Notes

A blend of varietals and vineyard sites with an ample variety of soils, clones and rootstocks, brings enormous complexity to this wine. You will find aromas and bold flavors of blueberry, dark cherry and plum with hints of dark chocolate and mocha. The Cabernet Sauvignon grants the wine its unique structure and round tannins, while the Petit Verdot, Malbec and Merlot provide lushness and fruit intensity. Firm and nicely integrated tannins make for a smooth and long finish to this multi-dimensional Napa Valley wine.