



SOURCE:
Napa Valley

VARIETAL COMPOSITION:
96% Merlot, 2% Malbec,
2% Cabernet Sauvignon

VINIFICATION:
100% French oak (38% new)
for 20 months

ABV:
14.1%



Stags' Leap

2020 NAPA VALLEY MERLOT

Established in 1893, Stags' Leap Winery is one of the oldest wine estates within the acclaimed Stags Leap District, producing wines expressive of its unique terroir. With an enduring winemaking philosophy that honors traditional techniques while embracing modern capabilities, and by using the finest grapes from our own 80-acre vineyard and from quality-focused growers, Stags' Leap wines embody a natural balance, exhibiting both intensity and finesse, while bringing forth the inherent qualities of each variety.

VINTAGE

Despite some memorably atypical factors that made 2020 one of the most challenging seasons in history, our talented and always optimistic winemakers created wines of very high quality from this unprecedented vintage. It was a warm, dry winter and the rain and cooler weather didn't arrive until the end of March. While the mild spring provided a great early start, the winery followed extensive safety protocols due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Summer brought very cool mornings and very warm days. Harvest was interrupted by wildfires across California, which came just as grapes started to be picked. We were very fortunate that none of our vineyards were in the active fire areas and the red wine harvest started in late August.

VINEYARDS

Our Napa Valley Merlot is crafted with grapes from vineyards in the southern part of Napa Valley. Fruit from Oak Knoll makes up most of the blend, with the remainder sourced from the Oakville appellation and our very own Stags Leap District. Merlot can lose its varietal identity when exposed to too much heat, but the fruit from these vineyards exhibits varietal expressions of fresh fruit character, structure, and bright acidity.

WINEMAKING

The grapes for this Napa Valley Merlot underwent a two- to three-week maceration period designed to extract ideal flavor, color, and tannin from the skins. Using traditional winemaking techniques, the wine was aged in high-quality French oak barrels (38% new) for 20 months. The new oak imparts structure, ageability, and a slight spice complexity that still allows the fresh fruit flavors to take center stage.

TASTING NOTES

True to its southern Napa origins, the 2020 Merlot exhibits fresh, expressive aromas and flavors with notes of ripe black cherry, red currant, and black plum. These mingle with spiced notes of cinnamon, clove, Madagascar vanilla, and caramel from the delicately interwoven oak aging. Lively, lifted chaparral notes of lavender, fresh mint, and sage, dance alongside riper tones of blueberry preserves and bittersweet dark chocolate, while hints of anise and black tea add savory complexity. This sumptuous wine is creamy and round with a backbone of fresh acidity. The tannin profile is polished and firm, adding richness and balance. The finish is deep and nuanced, demonstrating grace and finesse.