



BELTED VINES

2021 MERLOT

STEWART VINEYARD, NAPA VALLEY



Stewart Ranch down in northern Napa Carneros has its toes in the estuary south of Napa, and stays cool and breezy. For the first time in a while, we had a normal growing year. 2021 had a few hot spells over 95°F and about 30% of normal rain in winter. Merlot enjoys a cool climate, but also requires hang time after veraison for the nice fruity flavors to develop. We had budbreak on March 25, bloom on May 16, and veraison on July 29. Weather stayed very warm through October with the last week of 90 to 100°F ending Oct. 5. We waited a few more days, but then rain was predicted, so on Oct. 11, we brought the Merlot in at 27 Brix, still with a nice 3.56 pH. It was crushed to tank heated to 85°F 4 days later and inoculated with D254 yeast, and pressed on Oct. 25th. It went to bbls 2 days later and was dry enough to add ML bacteria on Nov. 15. Its first racking off lees was Jan. 28, 2022, and it was racked 3 more times before bottling.

Pairs well with

Merlot has both finesse and generosity, without the more driving tannins of a Cabernet, so it pairs well with roasted vegetables and mushrooms, sausages with fennel and pepper, chicken cacciatore, roast turkey, and of course grilled baby back pork ribs.

Aromas

Lovely cool climate boysenberry nose with oregano, sumac and vanilla.

Tasting Notes

Ripe and mouth filling, wild cherry and boysenberry flavors, with mocha and dark chocolate and a touch of savory marinara sauce. Long plushy finish with a few young tannins for framework.

Bottled

Sterile bottled July 25, 2023

— *Alison Doran, Winemaker, tasted 7/22/2023*

PRODUCTION:	200 cases
COMPOSITION:	100% Merlot
VINEYARDS:	100% Stewart Ranch
APPELLATION:	Napa, Carneros
ELEVATION:	Sea level
COOPERAGE:	50% new Seguin Moreau Icône Elegance barrels for 20 months
ALCOHOL:	15.3% by volume
TA:	5.9 g/L
pH:	3.64

