

WHITEHALL LANE



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NAPA VALLEY MERLOT

VINTAGE

The 2018 vintage was a near perfect growing season! Bud break began in late March to early April, leading to a Spring that was mild and dry. Flowering proved to be long and gave way to a healthy set of uniform grape clusters. Summer was also quite warm and long, leading to a cooling effect near the end of the season and into Fall. Throughout the vineyard growing season, there were no heat spikes and the temperatures were steady and even-keel. The consistent summer weather encouraged our Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec, and Petit Verdot grapes to ripen in mid-September to late October when they were in perfect balance. The fruit is from our vineyards in St. Helena, Rutherford, and the Oak Knoll District appellations.

WINE

Upon hand harvesting in the early morning hours, our grapes were carefully destemmed and sent to tank for a whole-berry fermentation. The grapes were cold soaked in tank at 45°F for 4-7 days, allowing for increased color, aroma, and flavor extraction. After inoculation with a select yeast, the grape must (juice, skins, and seeds) fermented at 82°F, which allowed for a hot extraction on the skins. For fermentation cap management, the juice was pumped over the skins two times per day, wetting the cap evenly for a nice healthy fermentation. After fermentation and pressing, the wine was aged in 30% new French oak and 70% neutral oak for 20 months before bottling. The blend is 79% Merlot, 13% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Malbec, and 2% Petit Verdot. Whitehall Lane has always utilized the art of blending to make a Merlot with layers of flavors, complexity, and balance. These elements assist with the goal of varietal typicity in creating the perfect Merlot. This 2018 Napa Valley Merlot was bottled unfinned and unfiltered.

NOTES

This Merlot offers black cherries, brambly red fruit, pomegranates, red currants, cinnamon, and layers of graphite and licorice. On the palate, this Merlot has fine, firm tannins alongside mixed berry tart, wild strawberries, dark cranberries, rhubarb, toasted walnuts, chocolate-covered cherries, and toasted brioche. It is supple in texture and shows attractive depth on the finish. Enjoy right now and through 2032 with proper cellaring.

WINEMAKER: *Jason Moulton*

APPELLATION: *Napa Valley*

COMPOSITION: *79% Merlot,
13% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Malbec,
2% Petit Verdot*

ALCOHOL: *14.7%*

ACCOLADES: *90 Points - James Suckling*

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