

W O L F F A M I L Y V I N E Y A R D S

St. Helena / Napa Valley

2003 Meritage, Napa Valley Estate Grown and Bottled

Vineyards

The 2003 Meritage is a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc from the Wolf Family estate vineyard located just south west of St. Helena against the foothills of the Mayacamas Mountains in Napa Valley. The Cabernet Sauvignon was planted in 1996 to clones 337 and 7 on Schwarzman rootstock, on 4' by 6' spacing. This five acre vineyard lies on a slightly sloping area of gravelly, clay loam soils. Because of the close spacing, the vineyard has low per acre yields due to the small berries and very loose clusters. The one acre Cabernet Franc vineyard was planted in the 1970's on sparse, rocky, volcanic soils, situated higher up the slope toward the back of the property. The vines produce very small, intensely flavored berries with low yields.

Vintage

In general, the warmer temperatures in St. Helena provide ideal conditions for bringing out the depth and complexity of Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes. This is especially important in a cooler growing season like 2003. The mild temperatures softened the tannins and allowed us to use a larger percentage (56%) of Cabernet Sauvignon while not overpowering the fruit driven aromatics and elegance of the Cabernet Franc. The vines produced less than 3 tons per acre of small berries and ripened later than normal—mid to late October.

Winemaking

The Cabernet Franc was fermented with a commercial yeast, while the Cabernet Sauvignon was fermented primarily with native yeasts, pressed when dry then aged 16 months in 50% new French oak barrels and 50% one and two year old French oak barrels.

Tasting Notes

The cool 2003 vintage produced wines with very soft and well developed tannins, excellent concentration and extract. This wine exhibits lovely aromas of strawberry and blueberry jam, a nicely weighted palate and a creamy texture in the middle body and finish.

Statistics

Technical	14.1% alcohol; 6.3 g/l total acidity, 3.78 pH
Blend	56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 44% Cabernet Franc
Bottling	367 cases bottled March 2005
Release Date	Summer 2006
Winemaker	Karen Culler
Proprietors	Jane and Doug Wolf