



GUNDLACH
BUNDSCHU
EST. 1858

2001 RHINEFARM VINEYARD MERLOT

VINTAGE

The 2001 growing season saw a rare April frost, followed by early summer heat spikes, which reduced yields and promoted the development of exceptional flavor concentration in the remaining fruit. Autumn weather was moderate and rain-free, allowing for a long hang time on the vine.

VINEYARD

The Merlot is sourced primarily from the estate, blended with a small portion from the Desnudos Vineyard located 700 feet above the valley in the Mayacamas Mountains. The La Paz section of our estate, planted in 1976, is a cooler site that contributes complex mineral notes to the blend. The portion sourced from the lowlands in front of the winery tends to show forward red fruit such as cherry/raspberry flavors and provides us with structure and acid. Desnudos fruit from the higher altitude site offers black fruit character and in warm years adds tremendous extract to the palate.

WINEMAKING

Harvest was conducted in the early morning hours to retain the cool temperature in the grapes. The clusters were gently destemmed and lightly crushed with the rollers half open, to promote a partial whole berry fermentation (roughly ten to fifteen percent) towards developing palate delicacy. Fermentation of each lot was conducted and aged separately until final blending. The wines were pumped over twice daily with gentle sprinklers and tasted daily to observe tannin resolution and wine development. Several lots underwent extended maceration to better balance the tannins. An addition of 5% Cabernet Sauvignon added depth and dimension to the 2001 Merlot. The wine was not fined and was lightly filtered before bottling.

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES

Spiced plum and black cherry fruit characters and rich toasted oak qualities combine to create rich and complex nose and flavor profiles. The wine enters softly and then gradually broadens to fill the palate with integrated tannins and a firm acidity before coming to a long and focused finish. Delicious upon release, expect this wine to benefit from up to 8 years of cellaring.

Blend: 95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon

Harvested September 3-October 10, 2001

Brix: 25.2 TA: 0522 g/100ml pH: 3.55

Bottled in February, 2003 Alcohol: 14.4% TA: 0.60 g/100ml pH: 3.55