



2003 MOUNTAIN CUVÉE, RHINEFARM VINEYARD SONOMA VALLEY



VARIETAL COMPOSITION:

74% Merlot,
23% Cabernet Sauvignon,
2% Cabernet Franc,
1% Petit Verdot

HARVEST DATES: October 2003

BARREL AGING:

14 months
in predominantly French oak

BOTTLED: April 2005

CASE PACK: 12/750ml

PRODUCTION: 3,822 cases

ALCOHOL: 13.8%

TA: 0.59 g/100ml

pH: 3.68

RHINEFARM VINEYARD

The grapes for our Mountain Cuvée come predominantly from young plantings on our own Rhinefarm Vineyard and portions of wine lots that were not quite up to the rigorous quality standards of our Estate wines. With perfect southwest exposure and rocky, well-drained soils, Rhinefarm Vineyard produces wines with varietal character and a silken mouthfeel, even in the young-vine fruit used in this blend.

HARVEST NOTES

The 2003 growing season presented many challenges as well as, ultimately, very high quality fruit. Warm temperatures interspersed with early summer showers tested the vigilance of vineyard managers. As harvest time approached, spikes in daytime temperatures further challenged the endurance of vine and man alike. Mercifully, there were no rain events during the harvest period, allowing ample maturity time for the fruit. Despite nature's curve balls, the resulting fruit was rich, showing good concentration of varietal character.

WINEMAKING

The fruit was hand picked and delivered to the winery in the cool morning hours, then destemmed and conveyed into stainless steel fermenters. Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot were each fermented in separate lots, with gentle, twice-daily pumpovers. Each lot was pressed at dryness, and then racked into barrels. The wine was aged for 14 months in predominantly French oak; minimal use of American and Hungarian oak barrels added coconut and spice nuances. After blending, the finished wine was bottled unfinned and lightly filtered.

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES

Delightfully fragrant, with aromas of cedar and black spice, this inviting red has a supple mouthfeel and rich black plum and Bing cherry flavors backed by nuances of espresso and toast. The firmly structured finish is long and smooth, with lingering cocoa and cherry notes. Enjoyable now, it will continue to improve in the bottle over the next two to five years.

Jeff Bundschu
Sixth Generation Vintner

Linda Trotta
Winemaker

