

2023 PLUMPJACK MERLOT, NAPA VALLEY



VARIETALS
100% Merlot



ALCOHOL
14.4%



PRODUCTION
6,400 cases



95 POINTS
Antonio Galloni



PLUMPJACK

WINERY

WINEMAKER
Aaron Miller

AVA
Napa Valley

VINTAGE

The winter of 2023 was cold and wet. Our rainfall was ten inches above average, and we saw record snowfall in the mountains of the Napa Valley. So, understandably, our vines slept in a bit, and budbreak began about three weeks later than what is typical. Spring was cool. Summer was cool. And while we were getting reports of record heat throughout the U.S., the fall in Napa was... cool. The late budbreak and cool vintage led to a late harvest and allowed us to craft incredible wines with beautiful and fresh aromatics, vibrant acidity, and great depth, weight, and complexity.

VINEYARDS

Our Merlot is grown in two regions within Napa Valley. Our Oak Knoll vineyard is nestled up to the Mayacamas Mountain Range on the west side of the valley. The mild climate and alluvial soils in this region lend this wine great balance and structure. The mild temperatures allow the grapes to develop bright, pure aromatics and flavors, along with a beautiful natural acidity and elegance. The alluvial soils bring darker fruits to the nose and palate and give this wine its structure and concentration. Our Carneros vineyard has a cooler climate; these grapes bring an earthy, wet-stone element to the nose, along with beautiful dark fruit. The cooler temperatures help preserve the color in the grape skins, which not only contributes to the beauty of the wine swirling in your glass but also adds depth and weight on the palate, perfectly balancing the tannin.

FERMENTATION & AGING

Our Merlot grapes were cold soaked for 3-5 days before the onset of fermentation, which was allowed to reach a temperature of 90°F, then pressed off the skins after 10-12 days. The wine was then moved into oak barrels where it underwent malolactic fermentation. Of these barrels, 64% were new and the balance were once-filled barrels; 92% of the barrels were French oak Bordeaux, and 8% were American oak. The coopers used include Sylvain, Taransaud, Nadalie, and Quintessence. The Merlot was aged for 18 months before bottling.

WINEMAKER IMPRESSIONS

The 2023 PlumpJack Merlot is exceptionally expressive and complex. Take your time to peel back the layers and allow all the aromatics and flavors to be revealed. The nose bursts forth with rich notes of freshly muddled blackberries, boysenberry, and plum, and a bright cherry, raspberry, and pomegranate undertone providing lift. A touch of lilac adds a perfumed quality, while notes of sage and graphite bring a moody depth to the wine. The oak infuses this Merlot with aromas of nutmeg, cinnamon, vanilla, sandalwood, and hickory, adding depth, warmth, and complexity. The palate exhibits all of these flavors along with a dark chocolate, cocoa nib note. The tannin is firm and refined, and the vibrant acidity accentuates the fruit and brings a tension, a nervous energy, to the wine. Together, the tannin and acid contribute to a long, fruit-driven, mineral, and savory finish.