



G R A T O N C E L L A R S
C A L I F O R N I A
M E R L O T
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W I N E N O T E S

• G R A P E S O U R C I N G •

Grapes for our Merlot were selected from among the best coastal growing regions in California's Sacramento River Delta Region. In these areas, warm sunny days provide optimum grape ripening, while Pacific Ocean fog create cool nights and maintain the acidity in the grapes, resulting in a balanced Merlot full of flavor.

Appellation: 100% California

• V I N T A G E •

After a cool, wet spring, 2011 was consistently moderate in temperature for the entire growing season. A slightly smaller crop than normal was challenged by autumn rains, but expert pickers and timely decision making optimized the year's bounty. The wines will show great fruit character, finesse, and fullness in the palate.

Wine analysis: 0.57% total acid, 3.56 pH, and 13.6% alcohol, by volume

• W I N E M A K I N G •

After de-stemming the grapes, the juice was fermented on the skins for up to 2 weeks at ~80°F. This warm temperature aids in extracting color and desirable tannins from the skin of the grape. Gentle pressing of the must is essential for getting additional flavor and color, while avoiding the overly drying tannins found in the seeds. After a full malo-lactic conversion to soften the acids and add complexity to the nose, this wine was aged on oak at cool temperatures until it was ready for the final blend. The final blend often uses dark red blenders, including Merlot crosses to achieve the right hue of red and fullness of structure, while retaining Merlot's signature softness on the palate.

Varietal blend: 83% Merlot, 17% Blend of Merlot X Petit Verdot and other Reds.

• W I N E M A K E R ' S N O T E S •

Our Merlot is a rich garnet color, with flavors of black cherries, plums, and figs, with a soft, smooth finish. With its balanced acidity and ripe fruit flavors, this wine is an easy match with a wide range of main courses, including meats, pasta and vegetarian dishes.