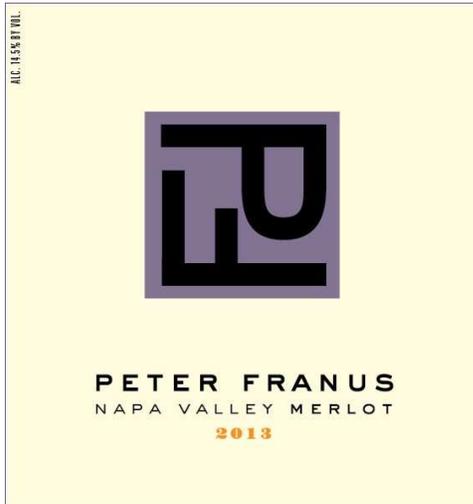


2013 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY MERLOT



Vineyards:	Stewart Vineyard Carneros Taplin Rd.—St. Helena
Composition:	95% Merlot 5% Cabernet Sauvignon
Harvest Date:	September 13 & 25th
Fermentation:	8 days, peak temperature 82°
Maceration:	15 days total before pressing
Oak aging:	19 months French 50% new
Bottling Date:	May 7, 2015
Production:	174 cases

TA 0.65 g/100 ml

pH 3.52

Alc. 14.5%

RS 0.32 g/L

CALIFORNIA RETAIL PRICE \$36

Guess what? Merlot is on the rebound! Suddenly it's becoming hip again to like a wine that has been out of fashion in recent years. When it realizes its potential, Merlot offers one of the most pleasurable of all red wine experiences, and so many seem to forget that some of the most highly regarded and sought after wines in the world come from Pomerol and Saint-Émilion, the land of Merlot.

Our crusade has been made easier with the magnificent grapes coming off the Stewart Vineyard in Carneros. Thirty-five years of winemaking experience has provided me with this insight: you know you are growing the right grape in the right location when it performs year after year. I can say this unequivocally about Stewart Vineyard Merlot. Even in the most difficult vintages it has consistently delivered, and it is typically the "go-to" wine in the barrel room because it tastes so good right from the start.

I am a firm believer that Carneros is the ideal location for Cabernet Franc and Merlot. Although you can grow those grapes in other parts of Napa Valley, their wonderful varietal characteristics—especially their aromatics—truly shine through in Carneros.

After the marvelous 2012 vintage, we were rewarded again in 2013, with a nearly perfect growing season, and a long ripening period as well. I refer to it a "leisurely" harvest, not forced to pick for fear of rain or extreme heat. When the winemaker is relaxed, so is the wine!

Our 2013 Merlot is a youthful dark ruby—almost opaque—leading you to the equally deep aromas of ripe plum, bay, dried herb, black olive and vanilla. Once again and typical for this wine, is the lively, uplifting mouth that greets you with appropriate acidity and will sustain this wine for a very long time. Tannins are seamless and disappear into the background. I believe that red wine should be refreshing as well, never ponderous, and offer our 2013 as a great example of that philosophy.

I write these notes on the anniversary of the 2014 earthquake, which unfortunately claimed three barrels of this delicious wine. So drink this in good health, and have fun with this serious wine!