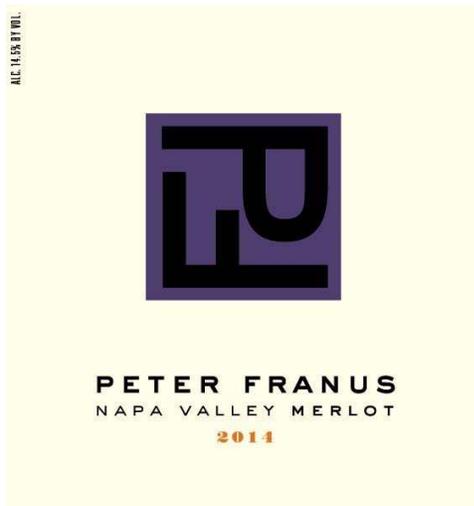


2014 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY MERLOT



Vineyards:	Stewart Vineyard Carneros
Composition:	100% Merlot
Harvest Date:	September 11, 2014
Fermentation:	6 days, up to 82°
Maceration:	15 days before pressing
Oak aging:	19 months French 50% new
Bottling Date:	May 5, 2016
Production:	294 cases

TA 0.59 g/100 ml

pH 3.57

Alc. 14.5%

RS 0.19 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.

We were rewarded with another outstanding vintage in 2014. Sunshine and a warm dry spring gave way to mild and ideal growing conditions throughout the summer. An uneventful growing season without extremes for me typically indicates a potentially excellent quality. Indeed, that was the case. Harvest began early, August 29, and finished early, October 2, avoiding the potentially cool and rainy autumn conditions.

Our 2014 Merlot offers a brilliant, youthful, medium-dark ruby color. An array of bright and inviting aromas of black cherry, ripe plum, dried herb, and a hint of fresh basil defines the nose. I call this an "intriguing" wine in the sense that its elusive character makes you think and keeps drawing you back, inviting you to figure out what exactly is going on here? The initial mouthfeel is lush, but is soon reined in by the acid and tannin structure, a hallmark of this wine and vineyard. Needless to say, this wine has plenty of life ahead of it.

This is the first of our 2014 reds to be released. I am very fond of the vintage, placing it stylistically somewhere between the 2012 and 2013—not a bad place to be. As I write, we are nearing the end of the 2016 harvest, and all I can say is you have much to look forward to!