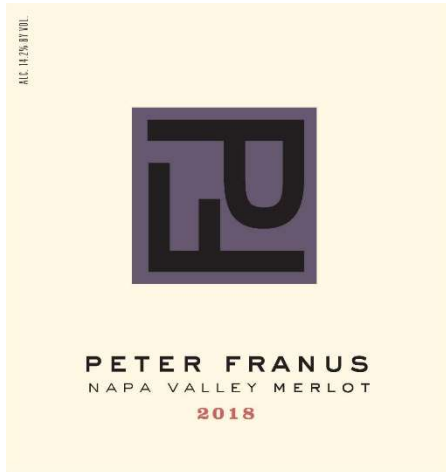


2018 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY MERLOT



Vineyards:	Stewart Vineyard Carneros
Composition:	100% Merlot
Harvest Date:	September 24, 2018
Fermentation:	7 days, up to 85°
Maceration:	15 days total before pressing
Oak aging:	19 months French 45% new
Bottling Date:	May 5, 2020
Production:	409 cases

TA 0.62 g/100 ml

pH 3.51

Alc. 14.2%

RS 0.22 g/L

CALIFORNIA RETAIL PRICE \$40

It's okay to love Merlot! 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.

We are on a mission to restore Merlot to its rightful stature as one of the truly great varieties. Our mission has been made easier with the magnificent grapes coming off the Stewart Vineyard in Carneros. I am a firm believer that Merlot needs the cooler climate such as Carneros to realize its potential and express its true personality. 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.

2018 was a marvelous growing season. Beautiful spring conditions followed abundant rainfall in the winter, resulting in even fruit set. We couldn't have asked for more ideal summer and fall weather—moderate temperatures throughout. The only two things that put me slightly on edge during harvest is anticipating hot temperature spikes or rain. Neither occurred resulting in long hang time, beautiful and balanced fruit that we could pick at our leisure. Harvest began roughly 10 – 14 days later than the previous vintage.

The 2018 visually greets you with a youthful dark ruby hue. The nose is effusive with black cherry, ripe plum, hint of thyme, sweet oak, and rose petal and urges you to taste. The initially firm structure leads to a refreshing and complex mouth with black cherry, anise, and spice notes. The tannin, acid, and fruit balance is impeccable, always a hallmark of this wine. The lengthy finish is the icing on the cake, and the 2018 is poised to last many years. As a point of reference, we've been enjoying our 2006 this week.

"Delicious" is the word. As I often say when presenting this wine, "if you don't like this, you don't like wine!"