

Chateau Montelena 2004 Montelena Estate Cabernet Sauvignon

Winemaker's Notes

The heat-dominated 2004 vintage was downright challenging, but there was nothing in it that the Montelena winegrowing team hadn't seen before. I had worked all the droughty vintages since 1976, vineyard manager Dave Vella since 1984. Over these years we've introduced new tools such as state-of-the-art satellite and internet weather forecasting; sorting tables and gentler de-stemming equipment and night harvesting. We were ready. Looking back, I am confident that the Chateau crush crew worked something special and far better than from similar, critically acclaimed droughty vintages.

Vintage Weather

By February we had already received more than 80% of the rain destined for the year. A mild and dry spring produced an extended bloom and considerable shatter resulting in a small fruit set. In August, temperatures began trending upward, and by harvest time it had evolved into a severe and prolonged offshore flow with very high heat, strong drying winds and exceptionally low humidity. It would be a short harvest, one of the most difficult of the last 20 years, a real battle. We walked the rows daily to decide how long the vines could hold out. In the end, the original Estate blocks put out less than 1 ton per acre. While the wine is as concentrated as we expected, it also boasts the classic, elegant Montelena style.

Tasting Notes

The Montelena earthy-berry aroma is very concentrated, showing lovely, classic Cabernet, warm earth and sun baked cassis with licorice and spice. On the palate there is integration of strong, deep, concentrated fruit in a perfect balance. Super fine tannin grips the palate, with ripe, round flavors that dance right on the seam between classic Bordeaux and California styles. I look back on the battle of 2004 with fondness because the wine is so wonderful now. And after 25 or more harvests we love the greatest challenges, because once they are but memories the toughest years become the most legendary adventures.



Production and Technical Data

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| Harvest Dates: | September 4 to September 27 |
| Bottling Date: | December 2006 |
| Release Date: | March 2008 |
| Production: | 8,200cases |
| Barrels: | 30% new French% |
| Time in Oak: | 23 months |
| Sugar at Harvest: | 26.0° brix |
| Alcohol: | 14.1% |