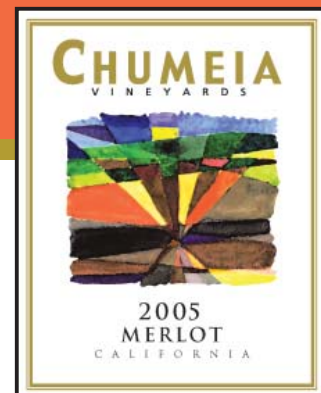


2005 | MERLOT |
California



The Vintage

A question we get more often than not is how does the rain affect the grapes? The answer is not an easy one. If the vines are dormant, then the water a vineyard receives from winter storms is greatly appreciated. A vine needs approximately 30 inches of water per year to perform its magic. Fortunately, the weather for 2005 was heavy in precipitation which was good news. On the other hand, if vines get too much water then they tend to be overly vigorous with vegetative growth. In short, too much water allows the vine to focus its energy on producing vegetation and not grapes. For proper grape maturity, the leaf surface area needs to be in balance with the amount of grapes on the vine. Furthermore, if rains come during the spring time, this may affect the overall set or amount of grapes available for that year. Finally, rains during harvest time are particularly bad news because excess precipitation may lower sugar levels and allow mildews to attack the fruit. 2005 was above normal for rainfall. Vegetation in the vineyard was above normal so leaf pulling was critical to expose fruit to sunlight. The summer heat was below normal, so longer hang time, better acids and overall quality was above normal. All in all, 2005 was a good vintage.

Blending multiple American Viticulture Areas (AVA's) is becoming more and more difficult. There is so much pressure to produce wines from specific AVA's or even specific vineyards. At Chumeia Vineyards, we feel that blending fruit from two different wine regions yields wines with depth and character. Both the Bootjack Vineyard in Paso Robles and the Schafer Vineyard in Madera combined their own attributes to create this flavorful Merlot.

The Wine

The fruit for both vineyards was hand harvested and fermented in small 4,000 gallon fermenters. The yeast strains used for these two wines were D254 and D80. The ultimate goal was to blend the two together to achieve power and balance. Once the wine completes fermentation, we sleuce the tank. Sleucing is a method we use in the wine industry to push the fermented must out of the tank with it's own juice.

The Good Stuff

Enjoy this powerful Merlot with Portabello stuffed ravioli or a freshly made Margherita pizza! Most beef, and red pasta sauce dishes will also pair nicely.

Winemaker Commentary

"Who ever said that Merlots are thin, flabby and uninteresting—I protest this stereotype! Try this Merlot; it is packed with all sorts of goodies. It has bold and rounded tannins, balanced acids and a full bodied palate. Chew on this one for awhile. **Ka-pow!**" - Lee Nesbitt

The Facts

VARIETAL COMPOSITION

100% Merlot

APPELLATION

California

VINEYARDS

Bootjack, Paso Robles & Schafer, Madera

HARVEST DATES

September 25, 2005 & October 2, 2005

FINISHED ALCOHOL

13.5%

RESIDUAL SUGAR

.02%

TOTAL ACID

.61

pH

3.51

COOPERAGE

Barrel Aged 10 months.
Old French oak

BOTTLING DATE

February 16, 2007

TOTAL PRODUCTION

1,250 Cases

RELEASE DATE

March 5, 2007

WINEMAKER

Lee Nesbitt

SUGGESTED LIST RETAIL

\$13