

MOUNT TAMALPAIS VINEYARDS

• M E R L O T •

• H I G H L I G H T S •

- Grown in a mature, eighteen year-old, organically-farmed, eight acre site - eight miles from Pacific Ocean
- Meticulous “cool climate” viticultural practices; superb clones, low yields, twice hand-sorted clusters
- Modest new French oak (30%) and bright acidity expresses sense of place rather than overt extraction
- Twelve barrels (290 cases) were bottled in January 2008. Style emphasizes balanced varietal purity.

• V I N E Y A R D •

Our Merlot comes from an eighteen year-old “monopole” vineyard in northwest Marin County which we farm organically. The vineyard terrain is characterized by gently rolling hills and its soil profile is moderately fertile and composed of decomposed marine sedimentary material and *Haire* loam. Merlot clones 3 & 6 (planted on 5BB rootstock) are heavily influenced by the Pacific Oceans climatic prowess. Bud break is earlier than neighboring regions, but as the season progresses, the cold weather pushes harvest to at least three weeks after Napa Valley. Our small Merlot berries yield a deeply-colored red wine with a broad aromatic spectrum and rich texture. This cool vineyard site gives us naturally high acidity, a hallmark of the great Merlots of Pomerol and Saint-Emilion.

• V I N T A G E 2 0 0 6 •

The 2006 growing season was normal in that it threw us plenty of curve balls. A very wet spring, heat spells, cool September and then heat again in October. Vegetative growth was heavy so aggressive shoot & leaf thinning kept the vines open and in dappled sunlight. We saw beautifully compact bunches with exemplary balance and finesse. We hand-harvested a modest (2.9 tons/acre) of tasty Merlot bunches on October 22. Consistent with prior vintages, excellent flavor developed beautifully at relatively low Brix levels, so final alcohol came in at a modest 12.8%.

Regional Composition: Marin County – 100% Varietal Composition: 100% Merlot

• F E R M E N T A T I O N A N D M A T U R A T I O N •

Our Merlot bunches were hand-harvested (24.5 Brix), hand-sorted and 15% “whole berry” fruit contributed a nice bright cherry character. We “bled off” 10% of the free run juice which added richness. A “cold soak” of four days in small, open-top, temperature-controlled fermenters helped gently extract vibrant color and rich flavor – but not alcohol. On Day 4 we allowed fermentation to begin naturally with native yeasts and later inoculated with BM 45 cultured yeast. Moderately warm fermentation temperature (max 90° F) and daily pump-overs developed structure and supplied the fermenting wine with oxygen. On Day 10 we gently pressed our still-fermenting must into small oak barrels (100% French, 30% new) where it slowly completed primary and secondary fermentations. Thirteen months in barrel with moderate hand rackings and one egg white fining contributed exotic spiciness and wonderful mouth-feel. After culling one barrel we bottled in January 2008.

pH: 3.52 TA: 0.64 g/100mL Alcohol: 12.8% Total Production: 12 barrels (290 cases) Suggested Retail Price: \$28

“Our aim is to showcase our Marin County vineyards unique cool climate attributes and craft small lots of delicious Merlot which display our unique provenance, exemplary varietal integrity and balance over sheer power.”

Jonathan & Susan Pey
Growers-Vintners-Stewards

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