



TITUS
VINEYARDS

**2003 MERLOT
NAPA VALLEY**

Vintage

The unpredictable nature of the 2003 growing season began with heat spikes in March followed by the wettest April on record. In August and September Titus grapes demonstrated early development of flavor, character and maturity, but attaining ripeness took a few additional weeks. A scattering of brief late rain showers encouraged vine vigor, resulting in an above-average sized crop. In September, unseasonably warm days alternated with cooler, overcast days, delaying harvest wrap-up until late October.

Vineyard

Our family vineyard is located on 40 acres of Napa Valley floor just north of St. Helena on the Silverado Trail. It has well-drained, sandy, alluvial soils and is characterized by its ability to produce complex wines with well-defined fruit flavors, gentle acids and naturally balanced tannins. The fruit from this small section of vineyard is largely devoted to blending into our Napa Cabernet Sauvignon and Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon wines with any excess reserved for a small production varietal Merlot.

Vinification

The grapes were harvested in early October where they were promptly de-stemmed but not crushed, allowing increased control over tannin extraction by minimizing the possibility of broken skins and split seeds. After a 48-hour cold soak to extract color and flavor, the grapes were fermented for 10 days, with pump-overs occurring twice daily. The free-run was transferred to 100% French oak barrels where it underwent malolactic fermentation, and barrel aged for 18 months.

Wine Profile

The complex nose of our 2003 Merlot displays rich, opulent aromas of raspberry jam, plum sauce, violet pastiche, baking spice, and a hint of earthiness. With each sip, the initial broad and juicy flavors of mulberry and black cherry expose the spicy, secondary characters of fruitcake, toast and nutmeg. This elegant, affable wine offers earlier drinking than the two previous vintages.

Technical Information

Vineyard Manager:	Eric Titus	Harvest Date:	9/22/03
Winemaker:	Phillip Titus	Barrel Aging:	18 months
Appellation:	Napa Valley		33% new barrels
Blend:	80% Merlot		100% French oak
	20% Cabernet Sauvignon	Bottled:	June 2005
		Cases Produced:	232
		Alcohol:	14.5%
		Total Acidity:	.56 g/100 ml
		pH:	3.71
		Release:	October 2005