

GHOST PINES[®]

2008 Ghost Pines Merlot

Excellence Has No Boundaries: Like the unharnessed, free-form, ghost-like tree with which it shares a name, Ghost Pines represents the long, rich, winemaking heritage of California's finest appellations. By departing from traditional single appellation grape sourcing, the Ghost Pines winemaker is able to craft consistently superior "Winemaker's Blend" wines which showcase the concentrated yet elegant flavor characters that come from the best growing regions in the state.

Harvest Report: The 2008 Napa Valley growing season began with the challenges of both drought and frost, but the weather quickly moderated. The weather remained fairly mild through the harvest months with just a few heat spikes as harvest began. However, the initial problems associated with the cold and lack of water at the start of the season led to much lower yields. Despite these difficulties, the fruit harvested was of exceptional quality, exhibiting rich, ripe dark fruit characteristic.

The challenging 2008 growing season began in Sonoma with unusually dry weather in late winter and spring with an unexpected frost in late April. As the vines were beginning to bloom in May, an extended heat wave set a smaller crop than normal in the vineyards. However, the end of spring and the summer months were typically moderate and warm with few heat spikes, which provided perfect conditions for the ripening of the grapes. Harvest began earlier than usual in August and picking rapidly increased as a heat wave in early September caused wine grapes to quickly ripen. The weather cooled in late September and harvest was complete by the end of October with minimal challenges. Yields were lower than previous vintages, but the result was fruit of excellent quality with intensity and depth.

Winemaker Notes: The grapes for the 2008 Ghost Pines Merlot were gently destemmed, allowing some whole berries to be delivered to the fermentor. Upon arrival, the grapes were fermented for 6-8 days in various stainless steel fermenters with temperatures holding around 85 degrees. The juice received skin contact for 6-8 days to extract maximum color and fruit characteristics, and then the finished wine went through malolactic fermentation prior to filtering and bottling.

Taste Profile: Sourcing from both the Sonoma and Napa appellations allows our winemaker to blend a wine which accentuates the best of what each region has to offer. Our 2008 Merlot was heavily skewed towards Sonoma County sourcing, which is evident in the abundance of jammy mixed berries in the aroma and flavors. The 10% Napa County Merlot gave the wine some added structure to balance out the fruit. And mocha undertones from French oak gave the wine complexity and irresistible chocolate covered black cherry notes. The result is a wine that lives up to our philosophy; excellence has no boundaries.

Finished Wine:

Varietal: 93% Merlot, 3% Petite Sirah, 2% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Petit Verdot, 1% Other

Appellation: 90% Sonoma County, 10% Napa County

Label Alcohol: 14.2%

Titrateable Acidity: 0.59 g/100ml

pH: 3.59

Residual Sugar: 0.38 g/100ml