



Robert Keenan Winery

1997 Napa Valley Merlot

Napa Valley's 1997 vintage shows the effects of a near perfect growing season. The spring of '97 warmed up early, giving the vineyards a nice awakening from winter dormancy. The summer provided consistent high temperatures to promote grape maturity, and a warm, rain-free September topped off the season. Keenan harvested Merlot at the peak of maturity.

As with past vintages of Keenan Merlot, the wine was produced from a blend of Keenan's mountain grown estate fruit, and fruit harvested from select vineyards within the Napa Valley. The Estate Merlot grapes from Spring Mountain District supply body, structure and density, while the purchased grapes soften the wine and add complexity.

After harvest, the Merlot was crushed and fermented in small lots. The wine was then aged for twenty months in French oak barrels. Ten percent Cabernet Sauvignon was added to the wine before bottling, and seven months of bottle aging have been allowed. The resulting wine shows intense plum and black cherry aromas that are enhanced by a toasty oak background. Consumers can expect the wine to open up to a rich, variety full-bodied wine that pleases the palate.

Reviews:

2000 California State Fair: **Silver Medal**

2000 San Francisco Wine Competition: **Silver Medal**

2000 Orange County Fair: **Silver Medal**

Jerry Mead's International Wine Competition: **Silver Medal**

Robert M. Parker, Jr., *Wine Advocate*:

"The 1997 Merlot Napa exhibits aromas of berry, coffee, and mocha. With soft, medium-bodied fruit flavors, it will drink well for 6-7 years. Richer and denser, with more structure, volume and flavor is the 1997 Merlot Spring Mountain (District) Estate... it is a very good effort that should drink nicely for a decade or more."

Wine Data:

Alcohol: 13.5%
Total Acidity: 0.60 grams/100 mL
pH: 3.37
Residual Sugar: Dry
Bottling Date: August, 1999
Production: 2,930 Cases
Blend: 90% Merlot,
10% Cabernet Sauvignon