



Robert Keenan Winery
Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley

Wine Advocate

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	Points	Release
2001 Merlot Napa Valley, 25th Anniversary	91	Sold Out
2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Napa Valley, 25th Anniversary	92+	Sold Out
2001 Cabernet Franc Spring Mountain District 25th Anniversary	94	Sold Out
2001 Mernet Reserve Napa Valley	92	Sold Out
2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve, Spr. Mtn. Dis. 25th Anniversary	93+	Sold Out

It is encouraging to see a yearly increase in quality from Keenan. While their Spring Mountain Vineyards are finally starting to come into production, purchased fruit is also utilized. The top wines of their current portfolio are the finest I've ever tasted from this producer.

The 2001 and 2002 Chardonnays are atypical California Chardonnays. They are concentrated, with gorgeous purity, crisp acidity as well as subtle oak presented in a Chablis-like style. Notes of pear, white currants, and minerals are found in these medium body offerings. They are not put through malolactic fermentation, which only enhances their crisp, zesty styles. Both should drink well for several years.

The medium bodied, structured, elegant 2000 Merlot (100% Merlot) is a reasonably good effort for this difficult vintage. It should be consumed over the next 3-4 years. The 2000 Cabernet exhibits fine sweetness, notions of red and black currants, medium bodied, and no vegetal or astringent characteristics. Give it another year of cellaring and drink it over the following decade.

The proprietary offering, the 2000 Mernet Reserve, is a limited production (274 cases) blend of equal parts Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon. Made in a Bordeaux-like style, it offers an elegant bouquet of tobacco leaf, red as well as black currants, minerals, earth, and spicy oak. It juxtaposes both power and elegance. Michael Keenan, the enthusiastic young proprietor who has done so much to resurrect this estate, believes this will ultimately be Keenan's flagship wine. From their Spring Mountain Vineyards, the 2000 Merlot Reserve (a 276-case blend of 90% Merlot and 10% Cabernet Sauvignon) is tightly-structured, dense as well as elegant, revealing notes of charcoal, black cherries and currants. Medium-bodied and stylish, with an understated personality, it should drink well for 4-6 years.

Quality rises dramatically in 2001, because of the vintage as well as Michael Keenan's ongoing efforts to compete at the top tier of North Coast Cabernets and Merlots. The deep ruby/purple-colored 2001 Merlot 25th Anniversary is rich, dense, and chunky with chocolate, black cherry, cola, herb, and spice box characteristics. It may merit an outstanding score with additional age. It should drink well for 7-8 years. The well-delineated 2001 Cabernet 25th Anniversary is more structured with additional beef and flesh on its bones. It is also more tannic and backward. There is a lot going on in this wine, but it was closed the day I tasted it. A revelation, the 2001 Cabernet Franc 25th Anniversary (100% estate fruit) is a gorgeous effort possessing tremendous fragrance (menthol, black currants, lilacs and smoke), great intensity, superb richness, and moderate tannin in the finish. It should have a fascinating evolution over the next decade. Sadly, there are only 100 cases.

A blend of 50% Merlot, 25% Cabernet Franc, and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon, the brilliant 2001 Mernet (less than 300 cases produced) combines the elegance of Bordeaux with a power and richness of Napa Valley. A saturated ruby/purple color is followed by sumptuous aromas of licorice, black currants, and spice box. Medium to full-bodied, with a delineated, fresh, pure, lively palate, this concentrated, yet surprisingly accessible 2001 should drink well young yet age for 12-15 years. BRAVO! Even better is the spectacular 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon Reserve Spring Mountain, another limited cuvee of less than 300 cases made completely from Keenan's Spring Mountain estate. An inky saturated purple color is accompanied by aromas of creosote, crème de cassis, melted licorice, espresso, and toast. It boasts fabulous richness along with a big, rich, medium to full-bodied personality without a lot of weight or astringent tannin. The finish lasts for 35-40 seconds. Give it 3-4 years of cellaring; it should last for two decades.

The 2002 Merlot and the 2002 Cabernet Sauvignon are both fat, fleshy, California-style offerings. The Cabernet Sauvignon exhibits more backwardness as well as unevolved, primary flavors. It appears both wines will merit scores around 90 points, which would be outstanding since they are generally fairly priced. They will certainly be more forward than more structured, delineated yet equally concentrated 2001's."