



HENDRY
SINCE 1939

CELEBRATING 79 YEARS of WINEGROWING

FRIENDS OF HENDRY FALL 2018

After a warm early spring, we experienced a run of cooler days and drizzling rain, both of which helped delay budbreak by about two weeks. Our weather since then has been warm but moderate, so the vines have continued to function on this slightly later timetable. We've had a nice long hang-time; the fruit is abundant and very flavorful. Harvest was expected to begin sometime around the beginning of September.*

By the time this shipment reaches you, purple fermentations will be bubbling away in our tanks, and the whole Napa Valley will be redolent with the aroma of wine! As the anniversary of last year's fires approaches, we are hoping for some early rains to bring this year's fire season to an end.

The fall shipment is loaded with hearty, flavorful red wines that should pair well with brisk days and fall dishes. We hope you enjoy them!

(*Harvest began September 3. As of this writing, September 20, all of the early varieties are in, and we are waiting a few more days to begin bringing in the later grapes to begin the second half of the harvest.)

2015 BLOCKS 7&22 ZINFANDEL *New Release* | Ruby in color. Soft aromas of dark cherry fruit, orange rind, cocoa, peppers, spice and black tea. Medium bodied, with subdued tannins. The balanced palate offers red fruits, bittersweet chocolate, smoke, and bright acid. Long finish. Pairing thoughts: a tender, grilled lamb chop, with salt and fresh ground black pepper; dry-rubbed barbecue of any kind (without too much sweet or heat); dark meat chicken cooked in red wine with mushrooms and herbs; pasta with a savory, meaty, reduced sauce...such a versatile wine that it's hard to think of anything in the middle range of richness that it won't go with! Retail Price \$36.00, wine club price \$30.60 Drink now and in the next 5-7 years.

MERLOT : Don't Call It a Comeback

“. . . a wondrous wine with soft and velvety tannins and a unique character of dark fruits, black olives, dark chocolate, and earth. It's a wine that can be amazing straight from the cask as just a baby wine or 50 years later as a mature red...has taken my breath away so many times over my more than 30 years as a wine critic." *James Suckling, jammersuckling.com, June 21, 2012*

"Simply stunning. A rich, deep and voluptuous wine endowed with rapturous beauty... simply impeccable... shaping up to be truly magnificent." *Antonio Galloni - vinous.com - May '18*

The wine described above is made from a grape whose parents are Cabernet Franc and the tongue-twisting Magdeleine Noire des Charentes. Its typical characteristics are a lush mouthfeel, complex, deep, fruit flavors and moderate tannins. A bottle of this particular wine will set you back between \$1,500 and \$3,000—significantly more for older vintages. It is a wine that most people will not have the opportunity to taste in a lifetime.

What is this mysterious, mouth-watering, sophisticated and "stunning" wine? Chateau Pétrus, from Pomerol. And the primary grape used to make it? Merlot.

If Merlot is capable of reaching these lofty heights of sensory experience, why doesn't it get any respect? Anyone who saw the 2004 film *Sideways* will remember the main character's exclamation: "I'm not drinking any ****ing Merlot!" The repercussions of this declaration have rippled through vineyards, tasting rooms and restaurants ever since.

But there was more to it than just a movie. Change happened over more than a decade. As the California wine industry shifted from bulk wines to varietally-labeled wines, delicious, moderate-tannin Merlot had been on a steady climb to popularity. Growers rushed to plant more to satisfy the growing demand. As often happens, some locations were not well suited to the variety, and produced less than stellar fruit. The slow maturation of vineyards meant that they were also young and uneven in quality, but the demand was still there for the fruit. These wines entered the market, and had already begun to degrade the grape's reputation before *Sideways*, and the famous battle cry.

In the subsequent decade, California growers pulled out over 10,000 acres of Merlot, while Pinot Noir plantings increased by 170%. But not all the Merlot acreage was pulled. Growers with established vineyards that had been yielding quality fruit held onto much of that acreage, and winemakers focused on practices that would make the most of that fruit. Fast-forward to Napa County in 2017: out of 30,000 acres, 13% were still Merlot (4,535 acres), while (7%) were Pinot Noir (2,671 acres). In the Bordeaux region of France, Merlot comprises 60% of planted acreage.

Good Merlot is still good Merlot: full-flavored, fruit-driven, silky, and balanced, with moderate tannins. It's exactly what a lot of consumers are seeking in the market right now.

"In fact, many California winemakers will agree that the best value on a wine list these days is a high-end Merlot, which — from a quality perspective — will often outperform Pinot Noir and Cabernet wines at the same price." *Kristen Hartk, The Salt, NPR, July 5, 2017*

If you're already a Merlot fan, you know this. If you haven't thought about this hard-working variety in a while, now's your chance to take another look. We invite you to try this small-production vertical selection either together or singly, and see what you think.

MERLOT VERTICAL: 2013, 2014, 2015

2013 MERLOT | Saturated ruby color. Herbal, smoke, cocoa and berry aromas. Medium body. Smoke, leather, berry and cinnamon spice on the palate. Firm tannins that will give this wine versatility with richer foods and sauces. A rich reduction sauce with any dish, accompanied by well-browned scalloped potatoes, or even a *steak au poivre*, would be a tasty match for the flavors in this wine. *Retail price \$40; Wine club price \$34. Drink now and in the next 5-7 years.*

2014 MERLOT | Ruby color. Bright berry fruit on the nose, with smoke, leather and meaty aromas. Medium body. A core of berry fruit, spice, cocoa, berry, cola, bittersweet chocolate and herbal flavors on the palate. Just enough tannin to give the wine structure and a solid backbone for pairing with medium-weight dishes, or lovely by itself. This wine will be a versatile food pairing partner with everything from hard cheeses and hearty fall risottos to roasted sausages and potatoes year-round. *Retail price \$40; Wine club price \$34. Drink now and in the next 5-7 years.*

2015 MERLOT I Rich, ruby color. Soft, dark fruit aromas, with herbal elements of tea and cedar. On the palate, medium-body, moderate tannins, plummy, round fruit flavors, cola and bittersweet chocolate. Decanting or setting aside in the cellar recommended, as these flavors are still knitting together and revealing themselves in the youngest of the three selections. A little air makes the wine more supple and integrated. Pair with grilled meats, burgers, herbed pork loin, or a pot roast with herbed, roasted potatoes. *Retail price \$40; Wine club price \$34 Drink now, or hold, best 2-7 years.*

Your Friends of Hendry wine club shipment details can be accessed here on our website anytime: <http://www.hendrywines.com/wine-clubs/wine-club-shipment-details.php>

And wines are available for easy reorder here: <http://wineshop.hendrywines.com/current-releases-cl.aspx>

Follow us on Instagram @hendrywines. <https://www.instagram.com/hendrywines/>