



VENGE 2018 KENEFICK RANCH VINEYARD MERLOT, CALISTOGA, NAPA VALLEY

Friends, I have been in the winegrowing business since as long as I can remember. I am now at the age of 44 years and I can count on both hands the number of times I have coined a vintage as “great,” meaning, that the vintage is of an extent, amount, or intensity above average. When considering greatness of vintages, and I mean this purely from what happened within the vineyard, vintages such as, 1987, 1990, 1997, 1999, 2007, and 2012, all come to mind. The common thread in all of these vintages was consistency throughout the growing season that led to near perfect, and above average, crop sets in Bordeaux varieties. And, now we can include vintage 2018 as one of the greats!

Kirk P. Venge



Our 2018 vintage of Merlot is a powerful testament to the newly established Calistoga AVA. Robust, savory, and gorgeous are all words that pop into mind with this year’s Merlot. A beautiful purple and dark red hue that clings to the glass drawing one’s curiosity. The aromatics are highly perfumed with clove, ripe blueberry, lavender and black currants. The palate is massive and expansive with no pocket of the mouth unfilled or escaping this wine’s delicious composition. The flavors expand over the front and through to the back of the palate presenting a lengthy and gratifying sensation. Anticipated maturity is 2022 to 2031.

IN THE VINEYARD

With the replanting of our Oakville Estate Merlot underway, we turn our attention to Calistoga and the famed Kenefick Ranch. Harvest took place on October 3rd with stellar results. The 2018 vintage marked a steady, evenly ripening vintage with record setting crop yields. The vineyard at Kenefick Ranch is among one of the oldest, continuously farmed vineyards in the area and sits on an alluvial fan of volcanic ash. Hot days and cool nights define this location where conditions are perfect for ripening Bordeaux varieties.

IN THE CELLAR

The fruit was destemmed into a combination of small stainless steel tank fermenters and open top *barriques*. Time on skins lasted 12 to 27 days. The fruit was then separated to “free run” and “light press” fractions. The Merlot was aged in 60% new, tight grained, French Oak barrels for 18 months. We employ a variety of cooperages for Merlot including Boutes, Sylvain, Taransaud, Gamba and Alain Foquet. 100% native, spontaneous yeast and malolactic fermentations were also key ingredients in the making of this wine. The gentle use of gravity flow winemaking, whenever possible, is carefully exercised throughout the making of this and every Venge wine. Bottled unfiltered

100% Merlot

413 Cases Produced