

# 1997 Meritage

## Ladi's Vineyard

Art & Tradition come together in our 1997 Meritage. Ladi's Vineyard has repeatedly won the Gold Medal at the Harvest Fair for Best Vineyard in Sonoma County. The Bordeaux-style blend accentuates the complexity of this wine. We produced 275 cases.

65% Cabernet Sauvignon forms the framework, giving structure, depth and a long finish.  
30% Merlot adds aroma and flavors toward the front of the palate.  
5% Cabernet Franc adds spice with a chocolate accent.

Barrel Aging for 25 months in French (90%) and American oak (a third new overall), added hints of violets and vanilla, mellowed the tannins, stabilized the deep color and helped clarify the wine.

**Tasting Notes:** This is a big, robust Meritage that fills the senses with layer-upon-layer of flavors. The color is a brilliant, dark garnet. The nose first presents the Merlot floweriness, followed by Cabernet berry aromas, with subtle oak and cedar overtones. The taste offers successive layers of fresh fruit, intermingling with varietal and barrel complexities that play on each other. Subtle American oak and toast nuances fill out the front of the palate, while the Cabernet Franc, along with the vanilla and violets of the French oak, come in toward the back. The tannins are soft, yet suggest the wine will live a long time and improve with bottle age. The structure unfolds as the wine warms in the mouth. It presents a rich, full sensation without edges or spikes, culminating in a very long finish. This wine is drinkable now and will age superbly, reaching its peak in about 10 years.

### Harvest & Winemaking Data:

Winemaker:	Robert Rex
Harvested:	By hand, September 24–26, 1997
Brix at Harvest:	Cabernet Sauvignon 24.8° Brix Merlot and Cab Franc 25.0° Brix
Acid at Harvest (composite):	.76g/100ml as Tartaric
pH (composite):	3.35
Yeast:	Pasteur Red (Bordeaux Variety)
Fermentation:	In small, open-top fermentors for 27 days, punched down 3 times/day
Max Fermentation Temp:	94°F
Malo/Lactic Conversion:	100%
Aging:	25 months in 90% French Oak, 10% American Oak, 35% new overall
Fining:	3 fresh egg whites/barrel
SO <sub>2</sub> at Bottling:	18 ppm
Alcohol:	14.8% by volume
Bottled:	275 cases – November 3, 1999,
Released:	January, 2000
Awards & Reviews:	91 Points, Best of Class among 38 entries The <i>Underground Wine Journal</i> —April 2001 and a few other medals here and there

