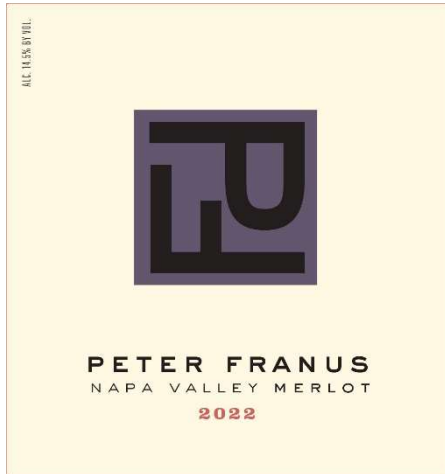


2022 PETER FRANUS NAPA VALLEY MERLOT



Vineyards:	Stewart Vineyard Carneros
Composition:	100% Merlot
Harvest Date:	September 8, 2022
Fermentation:	8 days, up to 84°
Maceration:	15 days total before pressing
Oak aging:	20 months French 40% new
Bottling Date:	May 13, 2024
Production:	150 cases

TA 0.67 g/100 ml

pH 3.55

Alc. 14.5%

RS 0.04 g/L

Say it loud! It's okay to love Merlot. It's becoming hip again to like a wine that has been out of fashion in recent years. When it realizes its potential, Merlot offers one of the most pleasurable of all red wine experiences, and so many seem to forget that some of the most highly regarded and sought-after wines in the world come from Pomerol and Saint-Émilion, the land of Merlot.

We are on a mission to restore Merlot to its rightful stature as one of the truly great varieties. Our mission has been made easier with the magnificent grapes coming off the Stewart Vineyard in Carneros. I am a firm believer that Merlot needs the cooler climate such as Carneros to realize its potential and express its true personality. I can say this unequivocally about Stewart Vineyard Merlot. Even in the most difficult vintages it has consistently delivered, and it is typically the “go-to” wine in the barrel room because it tastes so good right from the start.

Winter 2021 began with abundant rainfall followed by a very dry January and February. Still, soils started the growing season with adequate moisture—the vines were happy! Summer saw few extremes with moderate temperatures throughout the growing season. Harvest began early and uneventfully until the “big heat” arrived in early September, catapulting things along. Despite the challenge, the maturity of our Merlot vines—20 years +- and its Carneros location once again delivered the amazing quality we expect from this vineyard site.

The 2022 visually greets you with a beautiful deep ruby, nearly opaque color. As for the nose: it offers that unmistakable ripe plum and dried herb that define Merlot. Additional aromas of anise, sweet oak, and vanilla leap from the glass and lead to a voluptuous, juicy, and round mouth. As always, the fruit/tannin/acid balance are just right, a hallmark of this wine. Pure pleasure in a glass—honestly!

As I often say when presenting this wine, “if you don't like this, you don't like wine!” Our 2019 enjoyed the following review: “It's not too often that a wine so clearly distinguishes itself from its peers. This is a very serious Merlot. Don't miss it!” But guess what? We recently poured our 2019 and 2022 side by side at a trade tasting and it was a toss-up!