



TASTING NOTES

Deep red in color. Rich aromas of plum and black cherry. Flavors lean toward black cherry, pepper, and green tea. The subtle toasty oak complements the fruitiness in the mouth. Lush and full-bodied, with medium tannins and a lasting finish. You can look forward to cellaring a bottle or two seeing how the wine will develop in 3-5 years or enjoy it for dinner tonight.

BENCH VINEYARD SOURCES

For our Bench Vineyards Merlot, two sites were chosen in northern Dry Creek Valley: the Pedroncelli Estate Vineyards along Dry Creek Road east of the winery, and Jasper Long's vineyard, a couple of miles down the road from our own vineyard. The name chosen for this

vineyard blend describes the natural terraces that flank Dry Creek Valley and rise gradually into the steep hills. Characterized by sloped topography and gravelly/rocky residual soils, the "*Bench Vineyards*" offer unique growing conditions that bring out the best in several Bordeaux varietals, including Merlot, Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon.

WINEMAKING

The 2005 harvest brought in ripe, clean fruit the last two weeks of September. The fruit was crushed into stainless steel fermentors. The frequent pumping of juice over the skins (or cap) during fermentation brings to the wine a substantial increase in color and flavor intensity.

The young wine was aged in small American oak barrels for 12 months in order to develop smoothness and complexity. A blend of 25% new oak is used in the barrel aging program; this allows the fruit flavors to come forward while relying on a subtle backbone of oak components.

TECHNICAL NOTES

Appellation: Dry Creek Valley
Barrel Aging: 12 months in American oak
Alcohol: 14.5%
pH: 3.48
Total Acidity: .60g/100ml
Bottled: June 2007