



2018 MERLOT
HAWORTH
RUTHERFORD AVA

- Release Date:*** February, 2021
- Production:*** 8 Barrels
- Varietal:*** 100% Merlot
- Vineyards:*** Walther River Block Vineyard,
Rutherford AVA, Napa Valley
- Winemaking:*** Justin and Seana Stephens, Proprietors
Kirk Venge, Winemaker
- Cooperage:*** Aged for 22 months in 100% French oak, 50% new.
- Vintage Notes:*** As vintages go, 2018 was joyously tranquil. From the start in early February and through the mild weather of the Spring flowering season, nature cooperated in exactly the ways desired for an ideal grape set. As summer progressed, we saw relatively few heat spikes and slow, but steady progress in the vineyards which lead to extended hang times. While calm, 2018 was a marathon for winemaking as it required extended focus on the needs of each individual vineyard site well beyond the average year. Happily, this attention was rewarded with beautiful wines across our portfolio.
- Vineyard Notes:*** Located just below Lake Hennessey at the base of Pritchard Hill, the 7.5-acre Walther River Block vineyard is planted in the now dry riverbed soils of what was once a tributary of the Napa river. This combined with centuries of erosion from the hillside above gives the vineyard a unique soil composition that promotes both the lush and full-bodied fruit expression common to the valley floor alongside a densely layered and textured palate impression common to mountain fruit. Owned by longtime family friend Roger Walther, we have had the privilege of farming this vineyard together with Roger since 2000.
- Tasting Notes:*** Our 2018 Merlot fills the glass with deep, brooding notes of blackberry, black cherry, Asian spices, cedar and cured Spanish ham. On the palate soft notes of blueberry pie and brambled blackberry mingle with dark chocolate, nutmeg, and anise alongside elegantly rounded rolling tannins.
- Aging Advice:*** Given the distinct terroir of this small site and the polish exhibited in the wine, we feel confident that this will be a perfect candidate for 7-10 years of aging for peak enjoyment. That said, unlike many mountain fruit Cabernets, the structure of this Merlot is quite pretty in its youth, so does not prevent early enjoyment. If drinking young, pour small glasses and enjoy throughout the evening as it will continue to evolve in interesting ways for many hours.