



2019 MERLOT HAWORTH *RUTHERFORD AVA*

- Release Date:*** February, 2023
- Production:*** 5 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:*** 2019 as a vintage was full of unique and unexpected character. A cool spring and late rains well into May had us on edge as we nervously kept vigil against frost and shatter in the vineyards, fearing a repeat of the unseasonably cool 2011 vintage. Thankfully, summer arrived with its desired warmth, but with the harshest heat held at bay, allowing for a long, warm, and even ripening season. This was especially appreciated along the eastern side of the valley where the late afternoon sun lingers longest, and heat spikes are most perilous.
- 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:*** The 2019 vintage is typified by bright, beautiful fruit expression and this wine is a hallmark of that vintage character. Bing cherry and ripe plum pair with hints of violet, baking spices and delicate herbals on the nose. The rich fruit medley provides lift and roundness to the palate and is paired with fine acidity and evocative yet elegant tannins for a long buoyant finish.
- Aging Advice:*** Given the distinct terroir of this small site and the vibrancy of the wine, we feel confident that this is a candidate for 7-10 years of aging for peak expression. That said, while it exhibits quite a bit of Cabernet like character, this Merlot is generous and shows less tension in youth than a comparable Cab, so can be enjoyed young to appreciate the freshness and vibrancy. If drinking shortly after release, pour small glasses and enjoy throughout the evening as it will continue to evolve in interesting ways for many hours.