



THE STEVEN KENT WINERY

5443 TESLA ROAD, LIVERMORE VALLEY, CA 94550 | (925) 243-6442

WWW.STEVENKENT.COM

BDX COLLECTION 2015 MERLOT | LIVERMORE VALLEY

2015



MERLOT

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HARVEST NOTES

Despite the absence of rain at harvest and yet another year of drought conditions during the heart of the growing season, the 2015 vintage will be characterized by an hour's worth of hard rain in May that badly damaged blooming flowers on the vine and devastated yields across the State. Early ripening varieties such as Sauvignon Blanc were spared the greatest losses — the most heavily affected were the red Bordeaux varieties — and overall Ghielmetti Estate Vineyard produced only 69% of average. When yields are down, quality tends to rise, and 2015 was no exception. The quality of all of the Cabernet family of grapes was uniformly excellent, and we achieved desired ripeness at relatively low sugar levels. Grenache, Sauvignon Blanc, and Semillon also reached beautiful levels of maturity in the vineyard and have contributed to beautiful wines.

WINEMAKER NOTES

As with all of our BDX varietals, Merlot is hand-picked, destemmed, and fermented in small open-topped boxes. After a 5-7 day cold-soak period (when color is gently extracted and indigenous yeast are allowed to begin fermentation), primary fermentation will last about 7 days. Depending upon the vintage — and in 2015 this pertained — we extend maceration for 7-21 days longer, until we feel the wine has acquired the appropriate stability of structure. Consistent with a growing affinity for up-front fruit versus new oak aromas and flavors, this wine was aged in French oak barrels (only 45% of which were new) for 20 months.

TASTING NOTES

The last of the 2015 vintage wines to be released, the Merlot from Ghielmetti Vineyard is every bit a product of its vintage as any of the wines that preceded it. A bit shy aromatically at first, aeration reveals dark berry and dried sage and bay notes (while subtle seems to characterize the Merlots we make from this vineyard). Belying an alcohol level of 14.2%, the entry of this wine is all about juicy acidity, precision of structure and a wonderful tension between the astringency of mid-palate tannin and significant fruit that carries through the mouth with great pace. As the wine opens up subtler shades of black olive and herb show through organoleptically, but the blooming of the wine's gorgeous structure is the wine's most admirable quality. Slightly leaner than 2014 and 2016, this offering will —nonetheless— pair beautifully with food and may, in fact, outlive both bracketing wines. This wine will age beautifully — with proper storage — for 7-10 years.

VINEYARD SOURCE(S)

100% Merlot from Ghielmetti Estate Vineyard — eastern foothills Livermore Valley.

HARVEST DATA

Oct 13, 2015 | pH 3.65 | TA 0.70 | Alcohol 14.2%

FERMENTATION

After destemming and crushing each lot of fruit was fermented separately in 1 ¾ ton, open-topped fermenters. Fermentation and maceration lasted about three weeks.

COOPERAGE

20 months in 100% French oak, 45% of which was new.

CASES PRODUCED

193 cases

RELEASE DATE

February 9, 2019