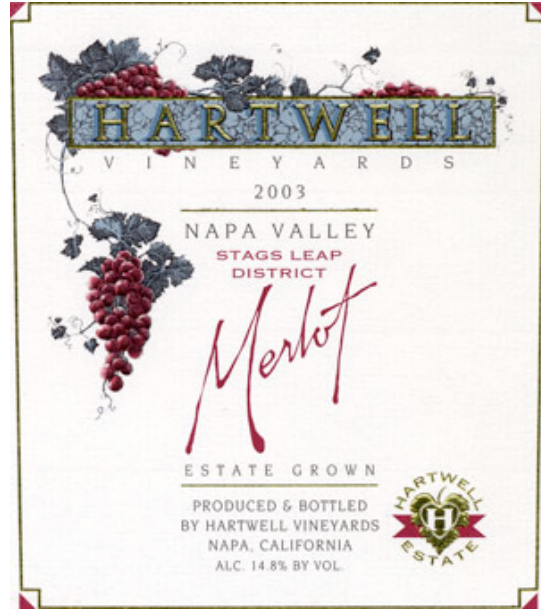




## 2003 Hartwell Estate Merlot Stags Leap District

Fresh cut cherries, cassis, and rose petal dominate the nose of the 2003 Estate Merlot. The wine has a fine focus, but gains expression in the glass, offering notes of blueberry, vanilla bean, graphite and cocoa powder. On the entry the wine shows firm but supple flavors of pomegranate and red raspberry, with mouth-watering acidity and hints of bittersweet chocolate. The tannins are apparent, but then seem to melt away; leaving a finish of anise and black cherry that lingers on the palate.

2003 was a challenging year for Merlot in the Napa Valley. A cool, wet spring made for a very small crop in the vineyard. Because of spring rains, many of the clusters were not fully formed, and a great deal of hand work in the vineyard was necessary to bring the fruit into balance. A heightened level of fruit selection, both in the vineyard and in the winery, helped to ensure that the resulting wine was the best possible reflection of what our vineyard has to offer. This wine will continue to open and gain complexity in the bottle, and should age well for 12 to 15 years.



**Appellation:** Stag's Leap District  
**Blend:** 78% Merlot, 22% Cabernet Sauvignon  
**Aging:** 20 months in mainly French oak barrels  
**Produced:** 320 cases  
**Release date:** Spring 2006