# ENTICING & IMPRESSIVE

## 2024 CANNONBALL CALIFORNIA
## MERLOT




**Origin:** Our favorite Merlot sites lie along California's coastline, where cool fog from the Pacific Ocean and San Francisco Bay helps moderate vine growth and fruit ripening. We source from select vineyards in Sonoma, Mendocino, and San Luis Obispo counties, choosing sites where Merlot develops classic varietal character with a balanced expression of ripe fruit and earthy complexity. Merlot is a vigorous, early-ripening variety that benefits from careful vineyard management and mild coastal conditions. The cooler climate helps regulate canopy growth and crop development, allowing the fruit to mature evenly.

**Winemaking:** Each vineyard site calls for a customized winemaking approach. Fruit is harvested at night or in the early morning to preserve freshness, then transported to the winery for a three-day cold soak, gently extracting color, aroma, and flavor from the skins. Following the cold soak, the must is inoculated with select yeast strains to enhance Merlot's varietal character and ensure a strong fermentation. Because Merlot is relatively delicate, fermentation is kept short and warm with minimal handling to protect the wine from oxidation.Near the end of fermentation, the wine is separated from the skins and transferred directly to French oak, where it completes primary and secondary fermentation before aging for 18 months. We take a restrained approach to oak, using just 18% new French oak to complement the fruit while preserving its character and freshness.

**Aromas:** Lustrous red in color, the 2024 Cannonball Merlot continues our tradition of crafting an elegant, California claret-style Merlot. The nose is layered with vibrant red berry fruit and subtle earthy notes of cedar and graphite.

**Taste and Flavors**: On the palate, ripe cherry gives way to savory green tea notes, framed by firm structure and a velvety mid-palate. Bright acidity lifts the finish, highlighting notes of plum and returning cherry fruit. Dark chocolate-like tannins provide structure and backbone, while a cranberry note adds freshness to the dry, balanced finish. Subtle French oak gently frames the wine, adding polish and complexity while allowing the fruit to remain the focus.

**Technically:**

AVA: California • Alc: 13.5% • TA:6.3 g/l • pH: 3.52 • RS: .21%

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