



**FROSTWATCH** *Vineyard & Winery*

## Frostwatch 2016 Bennett Valley Merlot

**Cases produced:** 200

**Composition:** 100% Merlot

**Brix at Harvest:** House Block-26.3 degrees Brix

**Blend TA:** 5.3

**Blend Ph:** 3.50

**Suggested retail:** \$35

**Harvest dates:** 10/10/16

**Alc:** 15.2%

**Vineyard Source:** The grapes come from Frostwatch Vineyard located in Bennett Valley, a relatively new AVA in Sonoma County. A gap in the surrounding mountains permits cool coastal breezes and fog to pour into the valley on a regular basis throughout the spring and summer. As a result, the appellation is distinguished by its very long growing season, modest yields relative to other areas and full-flavored wines with good natural acidity. Frostwatch Vineyard, planted in 1997, is located on a rocky apron beneath Bennett Peak.

**Winemaking:** The wine was fermented utilizing indigenous yeast with a ten-day cold soak, temperature-controlled fermentation (84 degrees F) and post fermentation extended maceration, with warming to 89 degrees F. The wine was on its skins for a total of 29 days. On November 9<sup>th</sup>, the wine was drained and gently pressed in a hydraulic basket press and put into a mix of new and used French oak barrels (25% new, 62% once used, 13% neutral) for 19 months. Malolactic fermentation utilizing indigenous malolactic bacteria began shortly after barrel down and finished January, 7, 2017. The wine was stirred and topped on a weekly basis during the two-month period it was going through malolactic fermentation. The lees stirring contributes a silky yet full texture to the mid-palate of the wine. After malolactic fermentation was finished, the barrels were topped and stirred and SO<sub>2</sub> adjusted on a monthly basis until April 20<sup>th</sup> 2018, when the wine was then carefully racked and blended and put back into barrels prior to its bottling, un-fined and unfiltered on May 14, 2018. The wine was then bottle aged until its Fall 2020 release.

**Tasting Notes:** This wine exhibits great density, coupled with raspberry and spice notes on the nose, with ripe cherries, plums and blackberry on the palate. Further, the wine has great texture, with a silky mouthfeel that exhibits nicely balanced fruit with just the right amount of acidity for pairing with a variety of foods.

**Winemaker:** Brett Raven

**Ratings:** 2016—97 pts, Best of Class, Gold Medal 2020 Press Democrat North Coast Wine Challenge, 91 pts, Gold Medal 2020 American Fine Wine Competition. 2015—90 pts Wine Advocate. 2014 vintage—90+ pts Wine Advocate. 2013 vintage--94 points Wine Advocate, 90 pts Wine Enthusiast. 2012 vintage--91 pts Wine Spectator, Top 100 Sonoma County Wines. 2011 vintage—91 pts Wine Spectator.