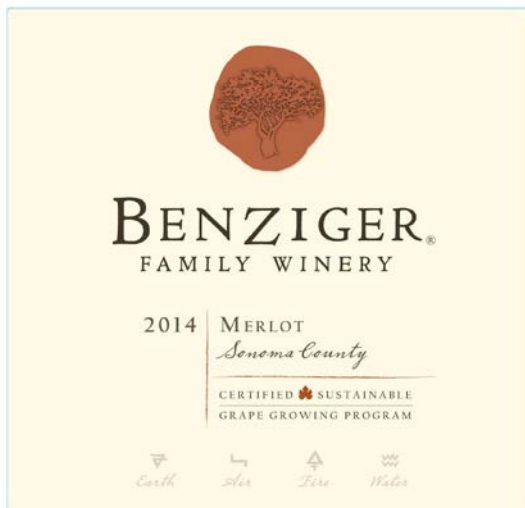


# BENZIGER

FAMILY WINERY

2014 MERLOT  
SONOMA COUNTY  
Alcohol 13.5% | TA .58 | pH 3.71



**TASTING NOTES** | Our 2014 Sonoma County Merlot has inviting aromas of dark fruit and spice which translate well at first sip. Experience black raspberry, ripe plum and anise flavors that linger on the tongue as its velvety tannins come from behind to give this merlot a smooth, polished finish.

**WINEMAKING** | Handpicked fruit for this Merlot was sourced specifically from areas in Sonoma County that elicit the ultimate expression of full fruit and velvety texture, while maintaining varietal integrity. In the winery we used a variety of techniques to maximize flavor intensity and retain bright fruit flavors while managing tannin levels, including cold soaking, pump over, and

varying fermentation lengths and temperatures. The wine was aged in French and American oak for 16 months.

**VINTAGE** | 2014 was a vintage that brought us a third year of drought. Our farming practices give us an edge over traditional farmers, since our vines have been taught to drive their roots deep into the soils, claiming water from below, not above. However, if the rain doesn't come soon we can expect some difficulties ahead. We received "miracle rains" in March, and a shake-up by Mother Earth in August kept us on our toes (thankfully we only had a few repairs needed). The summer went smoothly, without significant heat spikes, but we did see high humidity throughout. Harvest was fast and compact until the early part of October provided a break to process the massive amounts of fruit. This is another great vintage on the heels of the fantastic 2012's, and superb 2013's; 2014, creating wines of true pedigree.

**BENZIGER FARMING PRACTICES** | At Benziger Family Winery, we are dedicated to winemaking that reveals the true character of the vineyard, the varietal and the vintage in certified-sustainable wines defined by individuality and the passion of the people who make them. This wine was made with grapes grown by certified sustainable farming methods. Our sustainable philosophy promotes natural vineyard management, restoration of the land and biodiversity on the estate. We believe these practices result in wines that reflect the authentic flavors, aromas and character of the vineyard.