

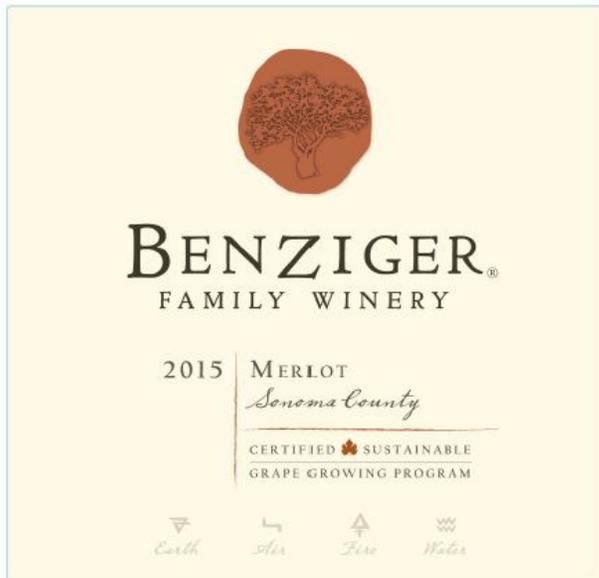
# BENZIGER

FAMILY WINERY

## 2015 MERLOT

### SONOMA COUNTY

Alcohol 13.5% | TA .58 | pH 3.71



**TASTING NOTES** | A full-body and velvety smooth tannins make an excellent first impression with all who seek a Merlot with thrust. Currant, black cherry and plum please the mid-palate while vanilla, violet and sweet wood essence heighten the nose.

**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** | Growing season 2015 was in the fourth year of the severe drought in California. The normally rainy season between January and March was quite dry resulting in a lighter harvest and an early one. We knew mid-summer that harvest would come early, and it did, by almost three weeks. Our Yields were down this year as the weather stressed bud break and we had fewer clusters on each vine. In some areas of Sonoma County we were down by as much as 40%! While we didn't get as much as vintages 2013 and 2014, only 203 cases of this Rosé, the caliber of the wine is just as remarkable!

**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.