



Lang & Reed 2004 'Premier Etage' Cabernet Franc– Napa Valley

The words Premier Etage by literal definition mean the 'first floor', or the level above the ground floor. Lang & Reed's interpretive definition means one level up, a deeper profile and more complex expression of the Cabernet Franc grape.

The Lang & Reed 2004 Premier Etage, composed of 97% Cabernet Franc and 3% Petit Verdot, is the eighth vintage release and emanates from two very distinct Napa Valley vineyards. The heart of the Premier Etage comes from the Madrigal Vineyard, located near Larkmead Lane half way between St. Helena and Calistoga. The vineyard lies in the middle of the old Richie Creek gravel bed. This vineyard has been the core of Premier Etage since its inception in 1996 and brings to the blend rich, dark chocolate flavors, textural tannins with substance and length.

The other vineyard in the Premier Etage assemblage is from the Wood Ranch vineyard which lies on a gravel bed on the eastern benchland of Rutherford where over the centuries Conn Creek has coursed its way back and forth over the valley. The geology of alluvial soils provides for quick drainage and sparse nutrients, allowing the vines to work a little harder during the growing season. The cuvee from the Wood Ranch included a small amount of Petit Verdot, which was co-fermented with Cabernet Franc.

Premier Etage rises to the challenges of expressing intense quality of fruit and builds complexities from the geology and climate of two vineyards. Each of the two cuvees receives slightly different fermentation regimes best suited to the particular vineyard and the ripeness of the grapes. All the grapes are de-stemmed, but not crushed, allowing the partial, whole-berry fermentation to bring forth the seductive Cabernet Franc perfume, aromas and fruit flavors. This year's addition of Petit Verdot broadened the palate impression and intensified the opacity of the color. Various lengths of post-fermentation maceration are employed before the wine is racked into French oak barrels for a 25 month repose before bottling.

Description

This Premier Etage exudes aromas of black cherry, raspberry and floral perfume with the most delicate hints of dried herbs. On the palate the wine appears svelte with the black cherry appearing again which mingles with dark Swiss chocolate notes. The wine finishes with a gentle briar, smoke and soft gentle tannins extending the fruit experience through a long satisfying finish. We always view the Premier Etage to be a 'Vin de Garde', or a wine to age, meaning that with proper cellaring the wine will display additional complexities and nuance.

Varietal Composition	97%	Cabernet Franc
	3%	Petit Verdot
Appellation	100%	Napa Valley
Vineyards		Madrigal Vineyards, Larkmead Wood Ranch, Rutherford

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Alcohol Content	14.9% by Volume
Total Acidity	0.53g/100mL
pH	3.85
Cooperage	French Oak Barrels – 25 Months
Case Production	287 Cases (12 x 750mL)
Bottling Date	Winter 2006
Label Design	Jeanne Greco, Caffe Greco Design, New York

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