

CLOS DU BOIS®

1998 MARLSTONE

ALEXANDER VALLEY/SONOMA COUNTY

Clos du Bois' Vineyard Designate Wines

In the late 1970s, Clos du Bois recognized that several of its vineyard blocks were producing truly exceptional fruit year after year. The wines from these grapes were kept separate and Clos du Bois' award-winning Vineyard Designates program was born. These limited production, single vineyard designated wines are created from specially selected Estate blocks in the Alexander and Dry Creek valleys. The Vineyard Designate wines express the unique personality of the vineyard and the vintage.

Grape Source

A blend of 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 7% Malbec and 5% Cabernet Franc. The grapes were harvested by hand from our Alexander Valley River Oaks estate vineyards between late September and October 1998, at an average 24° Brix.

Vintage

1998 will be remembered as an erratic growing season, with cold weather and rain lasting well into the spring, causing the latest budbreak in Sonoma County history. A pattern of heat spells followed by unseasonably cold weather kept growers on their toes. October brought a much-needed "Indian Summer," with warm sunny days and cool nights. While crop levels were lower than 1997, loose clusters and small berries enhanced flavor and concentration in all varietals. Winemakers enjoyed the slow and steady harvest, allowing special attention to be given to each batch brought to the winery. Red varieties in particular benefited from the longer hang time in cool to moderate temperatures.

Winemaking

The wine was fermented in stainless steel at an average of 84°F, then aged for 24 months in a combination of new (51%) and once-filled French Châteaux oak barrels. There was no fining or filtration used in producing this wine.

Winemaker Notes

Since 1978, Marlstone has been produced from a specific block of designated Alexander Valley vineyards. Originally, Marlstone was a blend of Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot until the more recent introduction of several other Bordeaux varieties — Malbec, Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc. In the spring, after all the red wines have completed malolactic fermentation and have been racked several times, we evaluate the samples of each wine from the Marlstone vineyard and determine which ones exhibit the rich flavors and elegant balance that are the hallmark of Marlstone. The varietal makeup of the blend differs from vintage to vintage.

Marlstone is designed to be an elegant satisfying wine and the 1998 is no exception. The addition of Malbec to this year's blend enhances the wine's forward fruit character, while the Cabernet Franc contributes a rich spicy quality. The result is a fruit forward wine that shows the familiar ripe black cherry, smooth mid-palate and long oak driven finish that we have come to expect in the Marlstone wine.

Food Recommendations

Serve the 1998 Marlstone with roasted beef, lamb or pork. A rich lamb stew over polenta will also work very well with this wine.

Descriptions

Rich forward fruit flavors of raspberry and ripe black cherry with a long oak-driven finish. (15 words)

Clos du Bois 1998 Marlstone is an elegant, fruit forward wine that has a rich silky mouthfeel and a long oak driven finish. (23 words)

WINEMAKER: Margaret Davenport

COMPOSITION: 48% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 7% Malbec, 5% Cabernet Franc | **APPELLATION:** Alexander Valley

ACID/pH: 0.61/3.56 | **RESIDUAL SUGAR:** 0.01% (dry) | **ALCOHOL:** 13.9%

CASES PRODUCED: 13,300 | **BOTTLED:** December 2000 | **RELEASED:** November 2001