



Recipes » original recipes from Amy's kitchen
Reviews » books, products, movies, restaurants
News » commentary, events, contests
Travel » travel experiences and observations

Hourglass Blueline Estate Merlot: Wine on Friday

Friday, July 26, 2013

Merlot is back! Actually, it never went away, it just fell out of favor with a lot of wine drinkers. Recently I visited Hourglass Wines in Napa and talked to owner Jeff Smith about Merlot, a wine many people think is insipid. Was it the dreaded Sideways (the movie in which the lead abhors Merlot) affect? Not according to Smith, "Sideways wasn't the problem, it was the punctuation point, at the end of the problem." And it's true, at the time of Sideways, there was a lot of lousy Merlot.

Lately there are a lot of Merlot producers, even some very good ones, trying to market Merlot by saying things like "Merlot for Cab lovers" but Merlot should be appreciated on its own merits. If you haven't had a really great Merlot in a long time, you might want to give it a try.

The 2011 Hourglass Blueline Estate Merlot has spicy and lots of fruit but also some chocolate and vanilla notes. It's silky and lush and complex in a good way.

Think about Merlot. Think Marilyn Monroe--voluptuous, fleshy and soft, sometimes elegant.

Hourglass acquired the lovely Blueline property in 2006, it's located in the Northeastern part of Napa Valley, two miles south of Calistoga and has a mix of alluvial gravel, sand, and loam. On the property Hourglass grows not just Merlot but Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec. The 2011 Hourglass Blueline Estate Merlot has spicy and lots of fruit but also some chocolate and vanilla notes. It's silky and lush and complex in a good way. It's a pricey wine at \$75 but cheaper than a "cult Cab."

One of the other things I love about Merlot is how it pairs with food, often in a course, there is a range of styles that stand up to spicier dishes too. It's great to see a winery like Hourglass committed to making a really great Merlot. I hope other winemakers are inspired to do the same.

Disclaimer: I was a guest at Hourglass for a private event and got a chance to try the wine and meet the winemaker and owner.

Hourglass



It's great to see a winery like **Hourglass** committed to making a really great Merlot.

