

STAG'S LEAP WINE CELLARS

2008 CHASE CREEK MERLOT

This limited-production wine, and its companion Chase Creek Cabernet Sauvignon, pays tribute to our ongoing efforts to protect and preserve our land and community. Chase Creek runs through our property and is part of a watershed that is crucial to the health of Napa Valley's ecosystem. Our creek restoration work in our estate vineyards has helped to not only create a healthier watershed, but also to help us produce more vibrant, energetic wines.

VINEYARDS & WINEMAKING

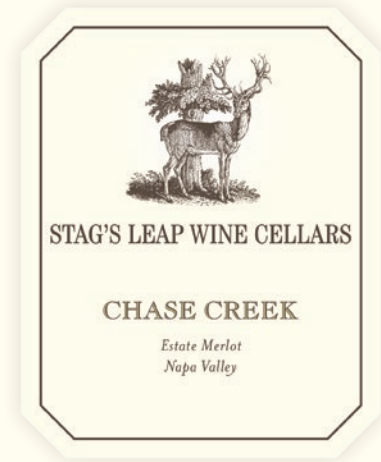
Chase Creek, an offshoot of the Napa River, courses along the western edge of our S.L.V. and FAY vineyards in the Stags Leap District. Over time, erosion diverted the creek from its natural course, and non-native plants took over the creek banks. We replaced these invasive growths with native plants, which attract beneficial insects and pest-fighting raptors, hawks and owls. Bobcats and coyotes roam the riparian corridor adjacent to our vineyards, and we've seen less soil erosion since the restoration — even after flooding in 2006. This 2008 offering is sourced from our S.L.V. (95%) and FAY (5%) estate vineyards. The wine was aged for two years in medium-toast French oak barrels, 57% of them new.

VINTAGE

The 2008 growing season was like a scary movie with a happy ending. A hard frost in April and a heat spike in May during bloom, greatly reduced vineyard yields. The frost — the worst in the memories of many Napa Valley vintners — had us up for 22-plus nights, monitoring our frost protection needs. Another heat spike in the first week of September caused concern, yet Mother Nature provided a reprieve and gave us a cool, calm harvest the rest of the way. Although yields were lower than normal due to poor bloom and set, the concentration and flavor development in the grapes was outstanding, and we made beautiful wines despite the challenges.

WINE

This Chase Creek Merlot is packed with aromas of red cherry, pomegranate, nutmeg, cardamom, cocoa powder and rosemary. These notes meld with pleasing flavors of bright cherry, chocolate covered candied orange peel and smoky oak on the palate. Beautifully textured, the wine offers an elegant balance between fine-grained tannins and palate cleansing acidity. This is a classic example of what Merlot should be: complex, balanced, supple and refreshing. Enjoy it with osso bucco, roasted rack of lamb or grilled salmon.



HARVEST DATES:	<i>Aug. 27 – Sept. 29, 2008</i>
ALCOHOL:	<i>13.4%</i>
pH:	<i>3.68</i>
TITRATABLE ACIDITY:	<i>0.52 g / 100 mL</i>
FERMENTATION:	<i>100% stainless steel tank</i>
MALOLACTIC FERMENTATION:	<i>100%</i>
BARREL AGING:	<i>24 months 57% new French oak</i>
BLEND:	<i>91% Merlot 9% Cabernet Sauvignon</i>
APPELLATION:	<i>Napa Valley (100% estate grown, 100% Stags Leap District)</i>
SUGGESTED RETAIL:	<i>\$85 per bottle</i>
RELEASE DATE:	<i>Spring 2012</i>

Nicki Pruss
WINEMAKER