

# ROBERT RHALL

**2006 Merlot**

**Paso Robles**

## ***Winemaker's Notes***

Rich briary aromas of blackberry, raspberry, and black cherry accentuated by hints of tobacco and earth emanate from our 2006 Merlot. Lush, ruby red color indicates the level of concentration yielded by the vintage and the vineyards. On the palate, rich flavors mirror the aromas and are complemented by soft, silky tannins on the finish

## ***Vintage/Viticulture***

The 2006 vintage was a season of extremes in Paso Robles. We began with a spring with a normal amount of precipitation. This rain along with moderate spring temperatures provided the vines with the conditions needed to grow a well-balanced canopy and set an average crop. From here conditions became brutal, temperatures set records for the month of July with the overall average for the month being the highest ever. Crop water and heat stress was managed by carefully monitoring irrigations and by thinning the crop. Following this heat, we experienced the coolest August ever recorded in Paso. The weather was so cool that some areas lacked adequate heat units to ripen their crops. Fortunately we had adjusted our crop early and had ample sugar building weather to ripen, allowing in long hang-time for excellent flavor maturity. The result of this vintage is deeply colored wines with excellent intensity of flavor.

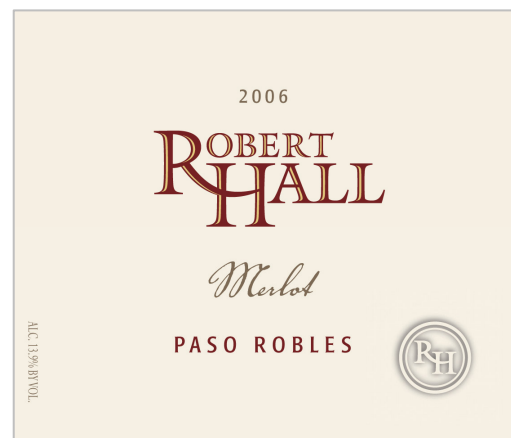
Our 2006 Merlot hails from several vineyards planted in the alluvial soils of the Estrella and Creston Districts and to the sedimentary clays of the Templeton District west of town. Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon, from the gently rolling loamy soils of our "Terrace Vineyard" are blended to soften and accent the Merlot. The fusion of concentrated fruit-forward Merlot from Paso Robles, married to soft and flowery Cabernet Franc and voluptuous Cabernet Sauvignon grown on a rigorous well-drained soil, yields a blend with opulent fruit, intriguing complexity, and satisfying structure.

## ***Fermentation/Maturation***

Our 2006 Merlot was produced from grapes picked in mid-September. Maceration lasted 10 days and was assisted by traditional pump-over to amplify color and flavor release. Subsequent to fermentation, the wine was drawn off and the skins pressed. After settling, the wine was racked into French and Eastern European oak barrels where it completed malolactic fermentation and matured for 16 months. Prior to bottling the wine received a final racking to stainless steel where the blend was assembled in preparation for bottling.

## ***Statistics***

Total acidity: 0.60%  
pH: 3.54  
Alcohol: 13.9%  
Blend: 88% Merlot, 9% Cabernet Franc,  
3% Cabernet Sauvignon  
Barrel Aging: 16 Months  
Bottling date: June 2008



*"The Essence of Paso Robles"™*

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