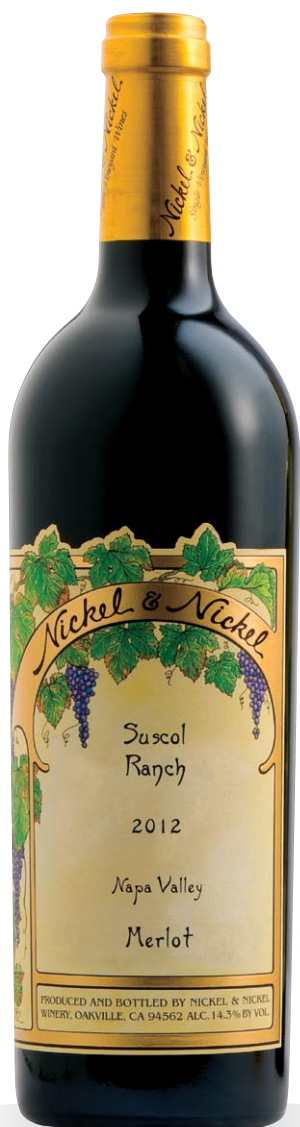




2012 SUSCOL RANCH

Merlot, Napa Valley



VINEYARD DESCRIPTION

The nine-acre Suscol Ranch is located in Jamieson Canyon, south of the city of Napa. The area is very cool, with dense fog early in the season and windy conditions all year long. The vines are planted on a gentle, north-facing knoll of deep, loamy soil and are cordon trained to give the grapes maximum sun exposure. The cool conditions allow the fruit to mature slowly, gracefully developing flavors and mature tannins.

HARVEST NOTES

An ideal 2012 growing season with warm days and cool, foggy nights offered the perfect conditions for fruit and tannin maturity. There were no heat spikes this year, so flavor development was at its peak. We usually get winds during bloom, but they were minimal this year. This resulted in uniform berry size and a larger crop. Bloom and veraison occurred two weeks ahead of last year and the vines looked good. The small, hidden berries within the cluster sized to normal this year, so we waited a bit longer for flavor development. Favorable weather in September and early October helped this cause and the vineyard was harvested in mid-October with the desired slight dimpling.

SENSORY EVALUATION

The 2012 Suscol Ranch Merlot opens with intriguing notes of dark plum, green olive and cedar. On the palate, layers of juicy fruit mingle with earthy tobacco leaf, olive and spice and blend nicely with toasty French oak. This wine is complete from front to finish and its unique character offers suppleness on the palate that few Merlots achieve. From year to year, the wine's distinctiveness lies in the lush, velvety tannins that expand upon first sip and develop with richness through the finish.

APPELLATION

Napa Valley

VARIETAL

100% Merlot

AGING

French oak barrels
(52% new, 48% once-used)

RELEASE DATE

March 2015

HARVEST DATE

October 17, 2012

SKIN CONTACT

12 days

TIME

17 months

FIRST VINTAGE

1997

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