

ST. FRANCIS WINERY & VINEYARDS

2003 MERLOT

Behler Reserve SONOMA COUNTY

HARVEST October 2003	BOTTLING March 2006
AGING Twenty-four Months	ALCOHOL 14.5% by volume
STORAGE French Oak	AGING POTENTIAL 10+ years
pH 3.75 TA 0.68g/100 mLs	CASES PRODUCED 505 cases

A superb Merlot, named in honor of the Behler family, who first cultivated a portion of the rich Sonoma Valley floor land in the early 1900's. The land is recognized as St. Francis' original estate vineyard and winery site. The 2003 Behler Merlot is a full-bodied concentrated Merlot, more Cabernet-like in character than some of their softer kin. A temperate spring produced grapes with firm tannins, while hot weather during the final stages of maturation resulted in a ripe, syrupy fruit profile. Our Sonoma County Merlot was hand-picked in late September, the fruit was crushed, fermented, pressed, then racked into 50% new French oak and 50% one to two year old French oak barrels. To complement the plum and strawberry flavors and the luscious mouth feel of the Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon from our Nuns Canyon, Rockpile and Kings Ridge vineyards were blended into the final cuvée two months prior to bottling in March of 2006. The wine was then held for an additional 12 months before release.



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COFFEE BRAISED SHORT RIBS WITH HORSERADISH CREAM

Paired with 2003 Merlot, Behler Reserve, Sonoma County

This sumptuous rib stew was a big hit at the 2007 Barrel Tasting event, where we served almost 2000 portions. The smooth, rich flavor of the beef pairs beautifully with the plummy merlot. Serves 6 as an entrée.

3 pounds boneless beef short ribs, trimmed of excess fat, cut into 3/4" cubes	¼ cup strong coffee
1 tablespoon kosher salt	1½ cups beef or chicken stock
1½ teaspoons black pepper	¼ cup kecap manis (sweet soy sauce)
2 tablespoons canola or vegetable oil	½ onion, cut into 2 pieces
1 cup St. Francis red wine—zinfandel, merlot, or cabernet	1 stalk celery, cut into 1" long chunks
1 tablespoon minced fresh garlic	1 small carrot, peeled and chopped into 1" long chunks
¼ cup tomato paste	Kosher salt and black pepper to taste

1. Pre-heat oven to 350°.
2. Place meat cubes in mixing bowl and toss with salt and pepper. Set aside.
3. Place garlic, tomato paste, coffee, and stock in blender and blend for 5 seconds until smooth.
4. Heat oil in large soup pot until almost smoking, and sear meat until brown all over, drain off excess grease, add wine and boil for a minute or so to burn off alcohol. Pour coffee mix from blender over meat, and add kecap manis, onion, celery, and carrot. Reduce heat, cover, and simmer for 1½ to 2 hours until meat is very tender. Check occasionally and add a little water if liquid is getting too thick.
5. Skim off any fat from the surface, transfer to a container and refrigerate for up to a week or freeze for up to a month.
6. Reheat and serve with buttered noodles or white rice, and a dollop of horseradish cream (recipe below).

Horseradish cream

- ½ cup whipping cream
- ½ teaspoon sugar
- ½ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 tablespoon prepared horseradish, extra hot (Try Beaver Brand)

1. Place all ingredients in blender and run just until cream starts to thicken, about 4 seconds. Place in small bowl to serve. Can be refrigerated in a covered container for up to a week.