



# Duckhorn Vineyards

A benchmark expression of Napa Valley Merlot, this wine reveals the finesse and depth of Duckhorn's estate vineyard with plush fruit, seamless structure, and refined elegance.

DUCKHORN<sup>®</sup>  
VINEYARDS

## Rector Creek Merlot 2020

California, USA

### Region and Vineyards

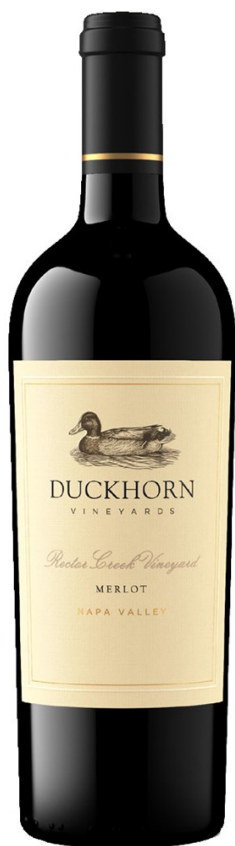
Rector Creek Vineyard lies just north of Yountville, along Napa Valley's famed Silverado Trail, in a cooler subzone shaped by marine influences from San Pablo Bay. This unique location delivers an extended growing season that allows Merlot to develop full phenolic ripeness while retaining acidity and aromatic clarity. The cooling afternoon breezes act as a natural regulator, moderating the warm Californian sun and encouraging a balanced ripening curve.

The vineyard's soils are composed primarily of **rocky alluvial deposits**, providing excellent drainage and low fertility. These conditions naturally limit vine vigor, concentrating the fruit and enhancing tannin structure. Duckhorn's farming practices emphasize sustainability and precision, with detailed clonal selections and canopy management strategies tailored to each block. The result is Merlot that is both structured and expressive, consistently showing **depth, finesse, and a strong sense of place**. This site has become a cornerstone for Duckhorn's single-vineyard program, reflecting the estate's enduring belief in the potential of Merlot in Napa Valley.

### Winemaking

The 2020 vintage was shaped by a mild spring and summer that allowed for gradual ripening and a focused harvest strategy. Grapes were picked before the peak of wildfire events, following rigorous quality assessments. The blend is composed of **99% Merlot and 1% Cabernet Sauvignon**, sourced entirely from estate-grown fruit.

Fermentation was conducted in stainless steel tanks with gentle pump-overs to extract color and fine tannins without over-extraction. The wine was aged for **18 months in 100% French oak**, of which **75% was new** and 25% neutral. The use of high-quality oak adds layers of texture and complexity while respecting the wine's varietal character. Bottled at **14.5% alcohol**, the wine exhibits structure, depth, and a luxurious mouthfeel, with ample freshness to age gracefully.



Alcohol :14,50 %

Composition: 99% Merlot, 1%  
Cabernet Sauvignon



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## Rector Creek Merlot 2020

### Tasting Notes

- **Color:** Deep garnet with violet hues, youthful and saturated at the core.
- **Aroma:** Inviting aromas of black cherry, raspberry, red plum, and wild strawberry, intertwined with notes of dark chocolate, allspice, and a hint of mocha.
- **Palate:** Silky and polished, with red berry and plum flavors gliding over velvety tannins. Accents of cocoa, cedar, and baking spice add detail to the mid-palate, leading to a long, elegant finish with freshness and poise.

### Did you know?

Duckhorn Vineyards has been a leading advocate for Merlot since its founding in 1976, long before the varietal regained its prestige. Rector Creek is one of the few Napa vineyards where Merlot consistently rivals Cabernet Sauvignon in complexity and aging potential. Its distinct microclimate, rocky soils, and clonal diversity make it a signature site in Duckhorn's portfolio.

### Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Duck breast with cherry-port reduction:** The wine's red fruit core and plush texture mirror the dish's richness and acidity.
- **Beef Wellington:** The wine's supple tannins and spice-inflected finish pair beautifully with the savory pastry and tenderloin.
- **Porcini mushroom risotto:** The earthy umami complements the wine's velvety mouthfeel and dark fruit nuances.
- **Aged Comté cheese:** Nutty, firm cheeses elevate the wine's round texture and subtle oak character.



#### Wine Spectator (WS) : 91 Points (2018)

*Sleek and steely, with graphite accents to dried red berry flavors that are backed by firm tannins. Notes of savory richness on the taut finish. (KM)*



#### Wine Enthusiast (WE) : 91 Points (2018)

*This bold, lush wine has baked fruit flavors of plum and dark cherry, supplemented by plush tannins and strong notes of toasted oak. Accents of tobacco, clove and cinnamon round it out and add length and complexity. (VB)*

