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— Ratings —

Vintage Charts

United States [/vintage-charts/region/united-states] ❯California/Merlot

< **Return to All Regions** [/vintage-charts]

Vintage	Napa	Sonoma	Drink Window	Description

| [2018 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2018&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]](/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2018&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California) | 91 | 88 | Drink or hold | Amid moderate growing conditions, valley floor sites yielded fleshy, big-textured wines, while mountain vineyards delivered focused minerality and firm structure |

2017 [/wine /search?submitted=Y& vintage[]=2017& varietal[]=Merlot& regions[]=v18:California]	92	89	Drink or hold	A late-season heat wave challenged vintners; the best wines are big, ripe and powerful, with taut tannins
2016 [/wine /search?submitted=Y& vintage[]=2016& varietal[]=Merlot& regions[]=v18:California]	94	91	Drink or hold	Nearly ideal weather results in plush flavors and structures supported by medium-grained tannins

2015 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2015&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	91	88	Drink or hold	Small crop from another drought vintage; firmly tannic, with deep dark fruit and spice flavors
2014 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2014&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	92	89	Drink or hold	Drought-influenced vintage yields well-structured wines with refined fruit flavors

2013 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2013&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	90	88	Drink or hold	Sunny weather and a long growing season led to fruit-forward wines
2012 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2012&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	91	89	Drink	Long, warm growing season produced rich, ripe and easy-drinking wines
2011 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2011&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	87	83	Drink	Rainy and cool year; many wines have hard tannins, herbal flavors

2010 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2010&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	87	84	Drink	Extremely cool season; many wines are herbal and have unripe tannins
2009 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2009&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	94	86	Drink or hold	Ideal season; best wines show balance, structure and lively acidity
2008 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2008&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	89	85	Drink	Top producers made superior wines while others struggled in a cool year

2007 [/wine /search?submitted=Y& vintage[]=2007& varietal[]=Merlot& regions[]=v18:California]	89	85	Drink	Supple and appealing wines from Napa; Sonoma offers value
2006 [/wine /search?submitted=Y& vintage[]=2006& varietal[]=Merlot& regions[]=v18:California]	92	85	Drink	Inconsistent; best are rich and supple, but many are lean and herbal

2005 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2005&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	89	89	Drink	Top wines are elegant and well-focused, with ripeness achieved at lower alcohol levels
2004 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2004&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	87	88	Drink	The best are supple, rich and complex; a step above the 2003s

2003 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2003&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	85	80	Past peak	Tight and tannic wines; best to decant
2002 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2002&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	89	81	Past peak	About as good as it gets in Napa, with Sonoma lagging
2001 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2001&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]	87	83	Past peak	Good, but not on par with '01 Cabernet

[2000 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=2000&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]](#)	83	80	Past peak	Mixed in both regions
[1999 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=1999&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]](#)	87	81	Past peak	One of the best for Napa; ordinary for Sonoma
[1998 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=1998&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]](#)	82	79	Past peak	Marked by lean, hollow wines

[1997 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=1997&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]](#)	86	86	Past peak	Ripe, opulent and supple wines
[1996 [/wine/search?submitted=Y&vintage[]=1996&varietal[]=Merlot&regions[]=v18:California]](#)	88	82	Past peak	Best overall for Napa, with rich, structured wine

Vintage ratings: 95-100, classic; 90-94, outstanding; 85-89, very good; 80-84, good; 75-79, mediocre; 50-74, not recommended

A score range indicates preliminary analysis based on barrel samples and/or a limited sampling; many wines of the vintage not yet reviewed.

Drinkability: "NYR" means the vintage has not yet been released; "drink" means most of the wines of the vintage are ready to drink; "hold" means most of the ageworthy wines have yet to fully mature; "past peak" means most of the wines are declining rather than improving.

SOURCE: *WINE SPECTATOR*