

WINE RECOMMENDATION

**Estancia****2004 Meritage
(Paso Robles)**

Estancia, which began as an Alexander Valley label founded by Agustin Huneeus, is now part of Constellation's Icon Estates portfolio and is focused on vineyards in Monterey (for cool-climate grapes like Chardonnay and Pinot Noir) and Paso Robles (for the warmer-weather grapes). The winery planted nearly 700 acres of grapes in 1999 at its Keyes Canyon Vineyard on the east side of Paso Robles; Cabernet Sauvignon dominates, but there's also Merlot, Petit Verdot, Zinfandel, Syrah and Petite Sirah.

That vineyard is the source for this Bordeaux-style blend of 61 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 30 percent Merlot and 9 percent Petit Verdot. The wine, which sells for \$33, spends 18 months in French and American oak barrels, about half of them new. It's a big, concentrated Meritage, with dark cherry and cassis fruit, some nice spice and a hint of mocha. There's a long finish marked by firm but approachable tannins. You could easily cellar this Meritage for a few years, but it's delicious now with something hearty, like a grilled steak, pot roast or even a juicy cheeseburger.

Reviewed September 5, 2007 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Estancia](#)

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Meritage

Appellation: [Paso Robles](#)

Grapes: [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (61%), [Merlot](#) (30%), [Petit Verdot](#) (9%)

Price: \$33.00

THE REVIEWER**Laurie Daniel**

Laurie Daniel, wine columnist for the *San Jose Mercury News*, has been reviewing wine for more than 10 years. She doesn't use numbers, preferring to describe her recommended wines and let consumers decide for themselves.

Laurie believes that bigger isn't necessarily better; she's partial to wines of balance, finesse and character. Her particular interests are Pinot Noir (versions that really taste like Pinot, that is) and aromatic whites like Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewürztraminer.