

**South Coast Winery****2003 Merlot, Wild Horse Peak Mountain Vineyard
(South Coast)**

Now this is a big, well-structured Merlot built for big food. I went for the beef. Indeed, this wine was superb with grilled top sirloin, topped with sautéed mushrooms, Anaheim chiles and red onions. That should tell you something right there. Made of grapes off the Freedom and Harmony blocks (don't you love the way some people name their vineyards), this was the first Merlot made from South Coast Winery's estate vineyards at Wild Horse Peak. This property is located at 2200 feet in the San Gabriel's above Temecula, where the winery is located. It definitely has distinctive mountain Merlot properties. Finally,

someone understands how fab high altitude Bordeaux can be.

Aromas of wild blueberries, mulberries and cedar greet you with a classic right bank nose jab. If this wine could speak French, it would. It delivers wonderful layers of pomegranate syrup, cassis, ham, elderberries and licorice, with nuances of black pepper. The tannins are amazing: well-muscled, sleek, and feisty. Like a wild Mustang, this wine is intense and relentless. It is indeed a horse that races at full gallop, never content to trot, and most certainly not one that will ever be saddle-broken. There should be more Merlots like this so people get to experience what these powerful animals are all about.

(Alc: 14.2%, Price: \$24)

Reviewed May 28, 2007 by [Laura Ness](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [South Coast Winery](#)
Vineyard: Wild Horse Peak Mountain Vineyard
Vintage: 2003
Wine: Merlot
Appellation: [South Coast](#)
Grape: [Merlot](#)
Price: \$24.00

THE REVIEWER**Laura Ness**

A wine writer and wine judge for major publications and competitions around the country, Laura Ness likens wine to the experience of music. She is always looking for that ubiquitous marriage of rhythm, melody, and flawless execution. What is good music? You know it when you get lost in it. What is good wine? It is music in your mouth.