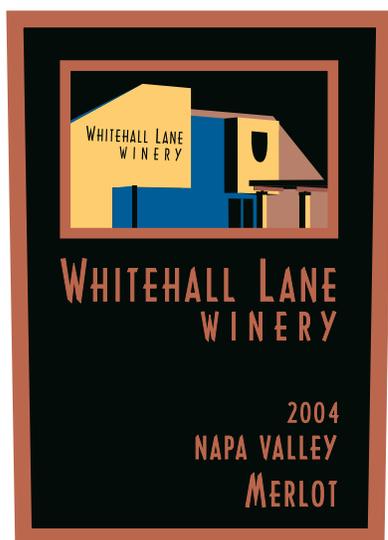# Whitehall Lane Winery
## 2004 Merlot
### Napa Valley

From: **Wine Spectator**
*May 15, 2007*

## 90 Points

"Ripe, rich currant, plum and blackberry aromas lead to a tight, intense core of flavors, shaded by intense yet integrated tannins. Hints of mineral, sage and dusty berry show on the finish. Drink now through 2012."

From: **Quarterly Review of Wines**
*Summer 2007:*

### FIVE STAR WINE

☆ ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

Rich, ripe, elegant, well-focused, black fruit and coffee flavors.

Whitehall Lane Winery
1563 St. Helena Hwy
St. Helena, CA 94574
800-963-9454
**www.whitehalllane.com**

**Blend:** 86% Merlot
8% Cabernet Sauvignon
6% Syrah

**The Vintage:** Heavy winter rains in 2004 gave way to warm March weather that led to an early bud break in our Napa Valley vineyards. The perfect summer weather was ideal for flavor and sugar development in the grapes. Growing conditions were exceptional in 2004 concluding in an early harvest. Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes matured approximately two weeks ahead of normal. Yields were somewhat lower than expected but quality was outstanding.

**Winemaking:** The Merlot grapes that make up this blend were all harvested by hand in mid-September. The grapes were grown primarily in two of the winery's Rutherford vineyards. The fruit was fermented at an average of 85°F with gentle pump-overs for excellent flavor and color extraction. The wine was aged in a combination of American and French oak barrels for 18 months. Cabernet Sauvignon was added to the blend for more weight in the mid-palate and increased length on the finish. The 6% Syrah enhances the aromas, texture and adds complexity to the wine.

**Tasting Notes:** With the exceptional fruit of the 2004 growing season, this Merlot is enticing. It has appealing aromas of blackberry, toasty oak and a hint of spice. The wine is inherently soft and delivers silky flavors of berry, fig, cocoa and plum. With ample fruit, good weight in the mid-palate and velvety tannins, this beautifully balanced wine is ready to enjoy now, but with aging potential to 2010.