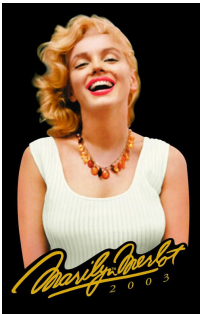


Wine of the Week

2003 Marilyn Merlot, Napa Valley
Thursday, August 25, 2005



Lest you think this is a "joke" wine, allow me to disabuse you of that notion. Despite the clever marketing package, this Merlot is a serious wine with deep aromas of sweet fruit and multilayered complexity. On the palate, the wine is chewy, but exhibits the same elegance Ms. Monroe did.



Additionally, there are chocolate and coffee notes, no doubt from the new oak (30 percent) that was used to round out the blend, which has 15 percent Cabernet. There is a long finish which will carry the wine for a good 10 more years.

The fruit comes from three different sources -- Yountmill, Beckstoffer, and Rigi -- from Oak Knoll, Yountville and Rutherford. The listed alcohol is 13.9 percent, the TA is 0.57, and the pH is 3.69. The producer -- Nova Wines -- has declined to reveal how many cases were made by John McKay at the Napa Wine Co. (Royalties for using Monroe's likeness goes to three foundations.)

-- Alan Goldfarb