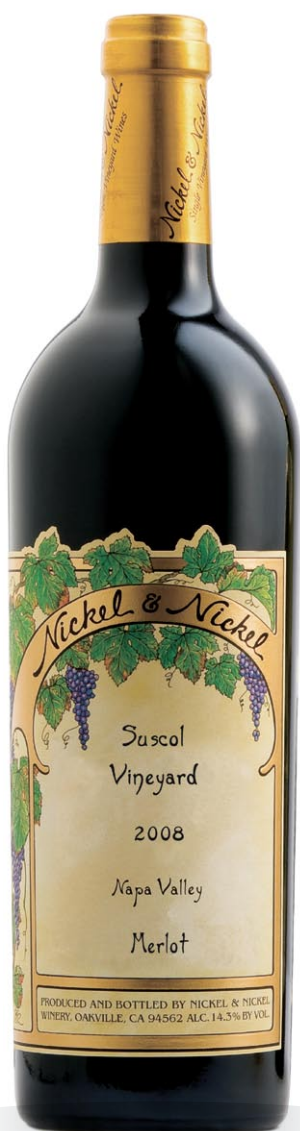




2008 SUSCOL RANCH

Merlot, Napa Valley



VINEYARD DESCRIPTION

The nine-acre Suscol Ranch is located in Jamieson Canyon, south of the city of Napa. The area is very cool, with dense fog early in the season and windy conditions all year long. The vines are planted on a gentle, north-facing knoll of deep, loamy soil and are cordon trained to give the grapes maximum sun exposure. The cool conditions allow the fruit to mature slowly, gracefully developing flavors and mature tannins.

HARVEST NOTES

The 2008 growing season provided a variety of weather patterns that presented a few challenges, but ultimately resulted in some exciting wines. The year began with substantial rainfall, but was followed by a dry spell that actually put us behind normal precipitation levels. The longest frost season in decades followed, which lowered vineyard yields, but the remaining crop developed beautiful intensity. Very warm temperatures in mid-May gave way to a cool summer and warm September, and the smaller crop ripened quickly in the heat. This vineyard was harvested at the end of September just as the fruit started to dimple.

SENSORY EVALUATION

Due to the small berries of this vintage, there is a darker, juicier fruit profile in this wine with an incredible intensity of flavor. This 2008 Suscol Merlot possesses all the natural juicy flavors of the vineyard with briary aromatics, dark plum and wild berry flavors, and a juicy impression upon entry. Layer upon layer of dust, earth, herb and cedar intermix with the fruit, creating a complex medley of flavors. The unique, supple character is full and lively on the palate. From year to year, the wine's distinctiveness lies in the lush, velvety tannins that expand upon the initial sip and develop with richness through the finish.

APPELLATION

Napa Valley

VARIETAL

100% Merlot

AGING

French oak barrels
(44% new, 56% once-used)

RELEASE DATE

March 2011

HARVEST DATE

September 29, 2008

SKIN CONTACT

10 days

TIME

16 months

FIRST VINTAGE

1997