

EVERYTHING YOU EVER WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT MERITAGE!

WHAT IS MERITAGE?

While Meritage wines are wildly popular (the fastest growing wine category in each of the last three years!) not every blended wine is a Meritage. Meritage wines must meet strict guidelines.

- A red Meritage must be a blend of at least two of the following varietals: Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Merlot, Malbec, Petit Verdot, St. Macaire, Gros Verdot or Carmenère.
- A white Meritage is a blend of at least two of the following varietals: Sauvignon Blanc, Sémillon or Sauvignon Vert.
- No single grape variety may make up more than 90% of a Meritage wine.

WHAT IS THE MERITAGE ALLIANCE?

The Meritage Alliance is an organization that owns the Meritage registered trademark and promotes the Meritage concept.

- In order to use the Meritage trademark on a wine label, a winery must meet the strict Meritage blending guidelines (above) and must be a dues-paying member of The Meritage Alliance.
- Membership fees are modest. The Alliance charges \$1 per case produced, up to a maximum of \$500. Fees are assessed on each vintage of Meritage a winery releases.
- As of January, 2013, there are nearly 320 wineries that are members of The Meritage Alliance, representing 26 U.S. states and six other countries – Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Israel and Mexico.
- More information about The Meritage Alliance is available online at www.meritagealliance.com. Also on Facebook (www.facebook.com/meriagalliance) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/meritageallianc).

HOW DO YOU PRONOUNCE “MERITAGE?”

Meritage is probably the most mispronounced wine term because people mistakenly think it’s a French word. It’s not!

- Meritage rhymes with “heritage.”
- The word is a combination of “merit” (for the quality of the grapes) and “heritage” (recognizing the centuries-old tradition of blending wine varietals).
- Meritage was selected from more than 6,000 entries in an international contest held to come up with a unique name for wines blended in the tradition of Bordeaux.

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WHAT ARE SOME OF THE MAJOR MERITAGE MILESTONES?

Meritage wines have been produced for 25 years since the founding of The Meritage Alliance (formerly The Meritage Association) in 1988. Here's a look at our history!

- **1987** Two dozen California vintners, led by Agustin Huneeus (Franciscan Winery), Mitch Cosentino (Cosentino Winery), Julie Garvey (Flora Springs) and David Stare (Dry Creek Vineyard), conducted an international contest to come up with a unique name for wines blended in the tradition of Bordeaux. The word "Meritage" was selected.
- **1988** The Meritage Association is founded and Meritage is trademarked.
- **1988** "The Poet" by Mitch Cosentino (Cosentino Winery) becomes the first Meritage released to the market. It was a 1986 vintage.
- **1988** Dry Creek Vineyard releases its 1985 Meritage, which is the oldest vintage labeled "Meritage."
- **1999** Michaela Rodeno, CEO of St. Supery Winery, is elected chairman of the Meritage Association, placing more emphasis on consumer and trade education.
- **2001** Wineries from Canada join the Association as membership is expanded beyond the U.S. borders.
- **2003** Meritage wines are included in tastings at VinItaly, expanding their reach into the European wine community.
- **2005** Membership exceeds 100 for the first time.
- **2006** Julie Weinstock of Adobe Road Winery is elected chairman of the Association.
- **2006** Meritage wines were invited to participate in a tasting of Bordeaux-styled wines organized by Italian journalists in Vicenza, Italy.
- **2007** Membership exceeds 200 wineries for the very first time.
- **2008** The Meritage Alliance celebrates its 20th anniversary.
- **2008** Kim Stare Wallace, Vice President of Dry Creek Vineyard, is elected chairman of the Association and revamps the Association's marketing program. Wallace is the daughter of one of the Association's founders, David Stare.
- **2009** The Meritage Association changes its name to The Meritage Alliance.
- **2009** A new Meritage video and website are unveiled.
- **2009** The Meritage Alliance participates in the San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival.
- **2010** For the first time, Meritage becomes the fastest growing wine category across all price ranges, up 14% over the previous year.
- **2010** The Meritage Alliance is a key sponsor of the third annual Wine Bloggers Conference in Walla Walla, WA.
- **2010** Meritage wines are poured at two major wine events – The Santa Fe Wine & Chile Fiesta and the San Diego Bay Wine & Food Festival.
- **2011** Susie Bynum of Ehret Family Winery is elected chairman of The Alliance.
- **2011** The Meritage Association is featured at the Hilton Head Wine & Food Festival, the Santa Fe Wine & Chile Fiesta and the Second Glass Wine Riot in Washington, D.C.
- **2012** For a third straight year, Meritage sales grow faster than any other wine category, this time up 26% from 2011 totals.
- **2012** The Meritage Alliance pours at the Charleston Wine & Food Festival, with Bravo TV's Top Chef taping a segment tasting through members' wines. The Alliance also poured at the Hilton Head Wine & Food Festival.
- **2012** Membership surpasses 300. At the end of 2012, 319 wineries in 26 U.S. states and six other countries are members of The Meritage Alliance.
- **2013** The Meritage Alliance celebrates its 25th anniversary.