



2002 Darioush Signature Merlot Napa Valley

Release Date	January 2005
Vineyard Location	Darioush Estate Vineyards in Napa Valley, Oak Knoll and Mt. Veeder Appellations.
The 2002 Growing Season	The 2002 season was distinguished by foggy mornings, warm days and cool evenings producing fruit of exceptional quality. The long even growing season, slow maturity of fruit and lower yields developed concentrated and complex ripe flavors.
Varietal Composition	100% Merlot
Brix @ Harvest	24.5°
Alcohol	14.0%
Cooperage	Aged for 22 months in 100% new French oak, 36 months air-dried, 'Traditional Château' barrels coopered in Bordeaux from forests in the center of France, notably Tronçais.
Vinification	All lots were hand-harvested, hand-sorted and destemmed with 30% whole berry retention after slight maceration. Cold soaked for 72 hours in small fermentors. Pumped over through primary fermentation for extraction and tannin management. Pressed 28 days post-alcoholic fermentation with the pressed fraction kept separate. The vintage was racked into barrels after 48 hours of settling and aged 22 months in new French Oak. Bottled with minimal handling.
Food Affinities	An opulent complement to roasted rack of lamb, spicy Italian sausage, herb-encrusted ahi tuna, roasted pork, hearty beef stews and aged cheeses.
Winemaker's Comments	Penetrating aromas of ripe blueberry and black currant fruit with lovely chocolate and roasted coffee notes. Richly flavored with incredible power, depth and richness. A delight from an exquisite vintage. 1,188 cases produced.