



ACCOLADES

MERITAGE

2014 Meritage

90 Points - David Lawrason

"From a warm vintage that experienced even temperatures start to finish, this Meritage blends roughly equal parts Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, each aged eight months, then combined and aged for another 12 months. It is a full bodied, firm and somewhat reserved blend with currant/raspberry fruit, and complex cedar, savoury herbs, oak resin, vanilla and spice. It is full bodied, initially smooth and almost sweet-edged then (14.7%) alcohol heat and considerable tannin weigh in. Quite concentrated, fairly tannic so cellar. Excellent length."

2014 Meritage

93 Points - Natalie MacLean

"A robust, complex and layered BC red wine that's a blend of mostly Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc, with some Merlot grapes. Aromas of fleshy ripe black plums, espresso and graphite. Decant 1-2 hours and pair with a rare steak."

2014 Meritage

94 Points - John Schreiner

"This is 37% Cabernet Franc, 35% Cabernet Sauvignon and 28% Merlot. Each varietal was fermented on its own and aged eight months in barrel. After the final blend was assembled, it aged another 12 months in American and French oak, of which 40% was new. It is dark in colour and bold in flavour. It begins with aromas of vanilla, black cherry and richly spiced dark berries, all of which is echoed on the palate. The finish is generous and long-lasting."

2013 Meritage

90 Points - David Lawrason

"This is a rather understated, firm yet elegant cabernet based meritage with 44% cabernet sauvignon, 42% cabernet franc and 14% merlot. It has a quiet but complex nose - rather dusty, herbal and finely oaked with currant and herbal notes. It is nicely elegant mid palate with fine, firm tannin. Excellent length. Could use a bit more time to show. Best 2019 to 2025. Well balanced."

2013 Meritage

91 Points - Jennifer Havers

"Flavourful and smooth. This is a wonderful blend of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, and Cabernet Franc, aged 18 months in French and American oak. Aromas of blackberry, currant, and black cherry, with hints of dried herbs, anise and subtle, smoky oak flavours. Full bodied, smooth on the palate, with some balancing acidity, ripe, rich dark berry notes, and some herbaceous notes on the finish. Enjoy with a grilled steak."

RIGHT BANK

2016 Right Bank

91 Points - Michael Godel

"Really rich and developed red here from Vanessa, unctuous, verdant, cocoa dusted and structured. The Right Bank concept is Bordelais, Merlot-based and looking to St. Émilion or Pomerol as the inspiration. Lots of wood and used to great effect, mostly as a salt and pepper seasoning for good vintage fruit. Aging nicely at this stage. Drink 2020-2025." Tasted November 2020.

2016 Right Bank

91 Points - David Lawrason

"From stone strewn benchlands that catch some evening light warmth in the narrow Similkameen comes a full bodied, ripe and fairly dense Merlot driven blend. The nose is immediate and generous with considerable chocolaty and smoky oak around the ripe blackberry fruit. There is a touch of leather as well. There is a friendly fruit sweetness on the palate along with the dusty tannin and sense of minerality. The length is excellent. Give it two more years." Tasted October 2020.

2014 Right Bank

91 Points - Rick Van Sickle

"Crafted from estate grown and hand-picked Similkameen Valley fruit, the grapes were destemmed and underwent a gentle crush before small-batch fermentation and hand punch down. This cuvée is almost entirely comprised of free run juice with only a small quantity of pressed juice added to balance the tannins. It was fermented and barrel aged for 26 months in 90% new American and French oak barrels. The nose has a smoky note on first whiff then turns earthy and brambly before revealing cherries, raspberries, anise, black currants and elegant oak spices. It's rich and mouth-filling on the palate with a smooth delivery that shows a range of ripe blackberries, anise, red fruits, licorice, dark chocolate and beautiful spice that is all lifted by freshening acidity through a long finish. Can enjoy new or cellar 5+ years."

2014 Right Bank

91 Points - David Lawrason

"Named to reflect the Merlot-based 'right bank' blends of St. Emilion and Pomerol in Bordeaux, this contains 77% Merlot, 14% Cabernet Franc and 9% Cab Sauv- fermented and aged 26 months in new American and French oak. It is the lightest and easiest of the current Vanessa offerings. It has a pretty, quite complex well integrated nose with savoury herbal and hay notes, raspberry, wood smoke, resin, vanillin and spice. It is medium bodied, quite smooth, juicy, lively and concentrated. A bit smoky on the finish. The length is excellent."

2014 Right Bank

93 Points - John Schreiner

"This is a rich, full-bodied Meritage anchored with Merlot in the classic right bank style of Bordeaux. The flavours of plum, black cherry and cassis simply enrobe the palate with luscious fruit."

2014 Right Bank

93 Points - Beppi Crosariol

"Somebody call Interpol. Clearly this red was stolen from barrels resting in the finest cellars of Pomerol. Actually, that can't be, because there's sunnier, richer fruit here than in most wines from that district of Bordeaux. The "right bank" reference here is appropriate, though. It denotes the wines of Bordeaux's eastern flank, where smooth merlot dominates the blends that tend to comprise smaller proportions of cabernet franc and cabernet sauvignon, as does this beauty from British Columbia's Similkameen Valley. Polished in texture, poised in stature and firmly structured, it shows perfectly ripened fruit suggesting cherry and raspberry, with notes of chocolate, tangy spice and, I dare say, Bordeaux-style graphite. The tannins are fine-grained and elegant. Worth cellaring for up to a decade. Maybe much more (who knows?)."

2014 Right Bank

91 Points - Deanna Van Mulligen

"Vanessa Vineyard's sun-drenched, rocky terrain makes for powerful wines and this new release, a blend of mostly Merlot with Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc is perhaps the most so. The Right Bank is still tightly woven, with sunbaked earth, toasted spice, espresso beans, and black fruits dominating the nose. It's brooding, inky and extracted and needs time to evolve. However, the bones are there for bottle maturation. I'd like to see what they could do with a larger portion of the Cabernets (something more Left Bank in style) in the blend going forward and see how that version would show."

2014 Right Bank

94 Points - Natalie MacLean

"A full-bodied, beautifully aromatic BC red wine that is a traditional "Right Bank" Bordeaux blend of Merlot-dominating Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc grapes. Aromas of black fruit, mocha and espresso from two years of aging in French and American oak. Only 1,091 cases were produced. Great depth, concentration and character."

SYRAH

2016 Syrah

93 Points - David Lawrason

"Here's a very intense, classic cooler climate syrah with a blast furnace nose of hot stones, pepper, black fruit and wild sage/thyme. The same flavour intensity crashes through the palate but the wine is not heavy or sapid. There is great energy with firm acidity, green fresh herbs and tar on the palate. The tannins are a touch green too, but within this landscape they are well meshed. The length is excellent to outstanding."

2015 Syrah

91 Points - David Lawrason

"This is an impressive, big, fairly soft yet well defined syrah. Deeply hued ruby, the nose is generous with ripe almost cooked black cherry, deep florals, smoked meat, licorice and pepper, plus plenty of oak from 20 months ageing in French and American oak. It is full bodied, fairly dense, hottish and quite tannic as well. The length is excellent with the pepper and dried herbs on the finish. Points here for classic expression, but you might want to age this for two or three years to see if tannins align."

2015 Syrah

91 Points - Deborah Podurgiel

"Produced from 100% estate-grown Syrah, co-fermented in small batches with a small percentage of Viognier produced in the traditional Rhone style. I first tasted this Syrah about a year ago and it was great then and is great now. The only difference now is the toasty oak spice on this wine has further integrated (aged for 20 months in new and second use American and French oak barrels) and the fine-grained tannins are more approachable. This Similkameen Valley Syrah is rich and mouth-filling with ripe dark berries, licorice, meaty, cocoa, savoury spice flavours silky-smooth on the palate and finishing with a kiss of vanilla. Paired with grilled venison steak." Tasted January 2021.

2015 Syrah

92 Points - Jennifer Havers

"Beautiful, with tons of fruit flavours bursting out of the glass. Aromas of blackberry, raspberry, and dark cherry, with hints of bramble / brush, smoke, cedar, and black pepper. Full bodied, with smooth tannins, and tons of ripe, plush fruit and berry notes, with smoke, pepper and a touch of cedar balanced with fruit and carrying through on a lengthy finish. Enjoy with a steak after 45 minutes in the decanter to really let the flavours open up."

2014 Syrah

92 Points - David Lawrason

"From long, warm, even vintage, this Syrah co-fermented with a small portion of white Viognier, then aged 20 months in American and French oak. It has a soft but billowing and classic syrah nose of black cherry, chocolate, licorice, loads of pepper and smoked meat. It is full bodied, smooth and rich - a bit soft in the middle with firm, fine tannin and some alcohol heat. Also shows a lick of granitic minerality on the finish. The length is excellent."

2014 Syrah

92 Points - Natalie MacLean

"A juicy BC red wine with luscious flavours of black strawberry, anise, violets, smoke and spice. Full-bodied with layers of smooth flavour. Alcohol is high at 14.8%, but the wine can handle it and remains balanced. Polished tannins. Pair with grilled lamb. Syrah food pairings: cassoulet, beef short ribs with red wine and herbs, lamb shawarma, barbecued pork with plum sauce, Moroccan vegetable stew."

2014 Syrah

92 Points - John Schreiner

"The Syrah was co-fermented with 10% Viognier. The wine was aged for 20 months in new and second-use American and French oak barrels. Svelte in texture, the wine begins with aromas of plum and fig. On the rich palate, there are flavours of black cherry mingled with deli meats and spices, along with a touch of black pepper."

2013 Syrah

94 Points - Deanna Van Mulligen

"Muscular, silky, succulent. Made under the guidance of winemaker Howard Soon, this wine hails from the poor, rocky hillside soils of the southerly Similkameen Valley. The vineyard is owned by John Welson and Suki Sekhon and they grow five varieties on 75-acres of rocky and sloped, well-drained soils. The second vintage is as outstanding as the first; substantial and savoury. Notes of blueberry, black raspberry and black cherry intertwine with sarsaparilla, peppery spices, bay leaf, mocha and smoked sausage. It is developed and smoothly woven; sweet and succulent. A muscular wine with a silky texture and a powerful and persistent finish."

2013 Syrah

91 Points - David Lawrason

"This is from a maturing vineyard in the Similkameen that made its name in a single vineyard wine by Howard Soon of Sandhill. This year however Vanessa Vineyards has opened its doors. This has a big ripe, complex nose of blueberry/blackberry pie with salt and pepper, tar, chocolate and mint complexity. Some licorice as well. It's full bodied, fairly dense and hot with a savoury, stony finish. Quite tannic. Excellent length. This is built for ageing."

MERLOT

2014 Merlot

90 Points - David Lawrason

"From a warm but even vintage that started and ended two weeks earlier than normal, this Merlot (with 15% Cab Franc) was barrel fermented then aged 16 months in one year old American and French oak barrels. The nose shows ripe berry pie, plum, and considerable oak with coconut, resin, spice and chocolate. It is a big merlot, quite plush, smooth and plummy and warm (14.9% alcohol). Tannins are Merlot moderate. Very good to excellent length."

2014 Merlot

91 Points - Tim Pawsey

"Brimming with red fruit and raspberry plus earthy and sage hints, with a luscious but well-structured palate of juicy raspberry, mulberry and mocha, underpinned by a wicked streak of Similkameen minerality. Raisin, pepper and spice persisting on the mid-palate through a savoury edged ending."

2014 Merlot

92 Points - John Schreiner

"This is the first single variety Merlot from Vanessa. The wine shows good concentration, with aromas of black currant, black cherry and spice, all of which is echoed in the dried fruit flavours on the rich palate."

2014 Merlot

90 Points - Beppi Crosariol

"The venerable Okanagan veteran Howard Soon (who recently "retired" from Sandhill after a distinguished career overseeing that and several other brands) has resurfaced as master winemaker for Vanessa Vineyard in the Similkameen Valley. This is an ambitious estate with a focus on full-bodied reds (plus a rosé). The 2014 merlot is a blend of 85-per-cent Merlot and 15-percent Cabernet Franc, with a smooth, luscious texture carrying flavours of ripe plum, currant jam, cocoa, tangy cedar and toasty oak. Well-structured."

2014 Merlot

92 points - Jennifer Havers

"This is a stunning wine!! Primarily Merlot, but with 15% Cabernet Franc in the blend. Aromas of dark plum, currant, mocha and a hint of warm spice. Full bodied, smooth, with a velvety texture, and a perfect hint of balancing acidity and soft tannins. Fruit and berry notes are plush and ripe, and there is more mocha and spice on the finish. Enjoy with prime rib roast."

2014 Merlot

95 points - Deborah Podurgiel

The 2014 Merlot from Vanessa Vineyards is an inaugural vintage for the winery. I can only say I hope they make more and lots of this style of Merlot in the future. I have visions of sugar plum fairies with the first sniff of pronounced plum, blueberry, mulberry and vanilla. The 85% Merlot and 15% Cabernet Franc wine blend is dry and of medium weight on the palate and is rich and smooth, in fact, plushy with ripe dark plum, dark raisins, nutmeg, blue florals, lingering with dark chocolate and soft caramel on the finish from well-integrated oak aging. The wine was fermented and barrel-aged for 26 months in new and one-year old medium-toast American and French oak barrels. Tannins are rounded and completely velvet. Alcohol is warming at 14.9%, but not sharp or intense. The winery claims that 2014 was an exceptional growing season that delivered a fabulous vintage for this wine. I wish them more of the same as this inaugural vintage is exceptional. Buy this one by the case or six-pack. (570 cases produced).

CABERNET SAUVIGNON

2015 Cabernet Sauvignon

92 Points - David Lawrason

“From the record heat of the 2015 vintage, this contains largely free run juice aged 20 months in French and American oak. It is a rich, smooth yet quite bright cabernet with lifted, very pretty floral, black currant, oak resin/chocolate and green cedar on the nose. Nicely defined Cabernet aromatics. It is full bodied, quite dense yet smooth and almost juicy. The tannins are gentle, the alcohol is elevated, the acidity drops out a bit in the middle, but the fruit is generous. Excellent length.”

2015 Cabernet Sauvignon

92 Points - Natalie MacLean

“Cedar smoke, dried herbs and wild blackberry on the nose and palate on this luscious BC red wine made from the classic Cabernet Sauvignon grape. Full-bodied and relatively smooth. Pair with a rare steak and decant for 1-2 hours.”

2015 Cabernet Sauvignon

92 Points - Beppi Crosario

“Ambitiously priced but ambitiously crafted. Veteran winemaker Howard Soon harnessed lots of flavour from the hot 2015 growing season in the Similkameen Valley to produce a bold red from the best cabernet blocks in the vineyard. Velvety in texture, this offers generous fruit suggesting blackberries, cassis and dates along with dark chocolate, tobacco, cedar and spice. This trophy red spent 20 months in new and used French and American barrels plus a further year in bottle. Just 195 cases produced. Approachable now, it should improve with at least eight years in the cellar.”

2015 Cabernet Sauvignon

92-94 Points - John Schreiner

“This wine is scheduled to be released in September. Decanting is recommended to allow the rich texture to emerge. The wine begins with classic mint and black currant aromas. On the palate, there are flavours of black currant and blackberry with coffee and dark chocolate on the finish.”

CABERNET FRANC

2016 Cabernet Franc

90 Points - David Lawrason

"This is an impressive young cabernet franc that captures all the right raspberry/currant fruit, tobacco and gently herbal notes of this grape, along with considerable oak character from 20 months in French and American barrels. It feels slender due to good acidity but in fact is quite full bodied with 15.5% alcohol and considerable dusty, starchy tannin. The length is very good to excellent behind the heat screen. Age it at least two years; it should live for a decade."

2015 Cabernet Franc

91 Points - David Lawrason

"From the hottest vintage in Vanessa's history, this shows a savoury nose of fresh herbs, tobacco and deep raspberry fruit, some oak smoke, spice and vanillin (aged 20 months in French oak, 30% new). It is medium-full bodied, quite supple and smooth. Tannins are firm with some alcohol warmth rising on the finish. A biggish franc showing some elegance and very good to excellent length."

2015 Cabernet Franc

93 Points - John Schreiner

"This wine was fermented and aged 20 months in French oak (30% new). The brambly blackberry aromas mingle with notes of coffee, cherry and toasty oak. Dark fruit flavours of figs and dates framed by vanilla and spice coat the palate."

2015 Cabernet Franc

91 Points - Natalie MacLean

"A full-bodied, fresh and savoury cool-climate Cabernet Franc from BC. Aromas of black plum, blackberry, cedar woodland and smoke. Perfect for grilled pork chops."

2015 Cabernet Franc

90 Points - Anthony Gismondi

"A single barrel of Cabernet Franc was one of the first single varietal wines made from Vanessa Vineyard grapes at Sandhill as a test of the vineyard's grapes capabilities by Howard Soon. This is the first release under the Vanessa Vineyard label. The vines were planted in 2006 and they are centered in one of the warmest vineyards in British Columbia. The extremely rocky site is the perfect antidote to the highly productive cab franc vines, keeping the yields in check. After 20 months in barrel, this franc has emerged as a hedonistic rich, round, warm, savoury, soft red with sweet berry fruits and a spicy finish that should have wide appeal. More Bolgheri than Bordeaux, it would be interesting to see this with a little less oak but I quibble. Many will love this style with a T-bone steak, and the price is realistic."

ROSÉ

2018 Rosé

91 Points - Natalie MacLean

"A lovely, medium-bodied BC rosé with racy acidity for seafood. Made from 67% Merlot and 33% Syrah. Aromas of cranberry, cherry and orange zest. Pairs well with seared tuna or grilled veggies."

2018 Rosé

B+ - John Nevison

"Featuring a remarkably paler shade of pink than previous vintages — in fact it's an engaging light rosé, a kind of kiss of sunset blush colour — Vanessa Vineyard's new vintage of rosé beckons with red berry fruit and a healthy herby hit. This is a leaner style pink wine overall, with a tart entry and a lick of spice followed by a good and fresh twang of a finish — testament to the Similkameen Valley, estate-grown Syrah and Merlot. This is an elegant rosé, put a tablecloth on the picnic table and serve alongside fish tacos or grilled halibut. Sassy yet elegant rosé."

2017 Rosé

91 Points - Natalie MacLean

"A deeply flavoured and robust BC rosé with racy acidity for seafood. Made from 67% Merlot and 33% Syrah. Aromas of cranberry, cherry. Pairs well with seared tuna or grilled veggies."

2017 Rosé

91 Points - John Schreiner

"This is a blend of 67% Merlot and 33% Syrah. Limited skin contact captured a delicate and appealing hue. The wine has aromas of cherry and raspberry leading to flavours of strawberry and watermelon. It is balanced to finish dry and crisp."

2016 Rosé

91 Points - Deanna Van Mulligen

"Dry, powerful, lively. Made from Syrah with a generous splash (32%) of Merlot, this inaugural release rose from Vanessa Vineyard is comprised of only 90 cases, which was sold in their new tasting room on their estate in Cawston. It is a blessedly bone-dry version ruby-cranberry in colour with aromas of sunwarmed strawberries, tangy cranberries and kumquats, wild herbs tealeaf and savoury spices. Impressive focus and structure; it is simultaneously lively and powerful. An excellent first vintage, for a red-only (so far) producer."

VIOGNIER

2017 Viognier

90 Points - Anthony Gismondi

"The 2017 growing season in the Similkameen Valley was atypical: the spring was cool and late, constraining the crop, as did a summer of drought. A perfect fall saw a small but ripe crop come to the winery. Vanessa is a spectacular, west/southwest hillside vineyard set on mostly rocky soils that take on the daytime sun and heat and release it all night long. The pick was late at October 16, but the fruit was magnificent. A long, cool ferment yielded a rich powerful, exotic style of viognier reminiscent of ripe peaches, baked apples and highly aromatic honeysuckle, but with enough acidity and minerality to remain vital. Well done and ready to drink. The winery suggests a match of baked brie and apricots and I am in."

2017 Viognier

93 Points - John Schreiner

"This is a ripe and luscious wine, the result leaving the grapes on the vines to mid-October for maximum flavour development. Apricot and peach aromas jump for the glass and lead to flavours of ripe apricot and guava. Good acidity keeps the flavours fresh. The finish goes on and on."

2017 Viognier

92 Points - Natalie MacLean

"A gorgeous, aromatic BC white wine made from the Viognier grape. Aromas of peach blossom, golden apple and baking spice. Perfect for mild curries and spices."