



## Meritage Fact Sheet

In 1988, a group of American vintners formed The Meritage Association to identify handcrafted wines blended from the traditional “noble” Bordeaux varieties. Most American wines are labeled after the grape variety that comprises at least 75% of that wine. Many winemakers, however, believed the varietal requirement did not necessarily result in the highest quality wine from their vineyards. Meritage was coined to identify wines that represent the highest form of the winemaker’s art — blending — and distinguish these wines from the more generic but government-mandated moniker “red table wine.”

### **The Name**

“Meritage,” pronounced like “heritage,” was selected from more than 6,000 entries in an international contest to name the new wine category. Meritage is an invented word that combines “merit” and “heritage” — reflecting the spirit of members of The Meritage Association and their drive for quality as well as their respect for the Bordeaux tradition of blending.

### **The Wines**

**Red Meritage:** A red Meritage is made from a blend of two or more of the following varieties: Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Malbec, Petit Verdot, St. Macaire, Gros Verdot and Carmenère (the last three are quite rare in the U.S.). No single variety may make up more than 90 percent of the blend.

**White Meritage:** A white Meritage is made from a blend of two or more of the following varieties: Sauvignon Blanc, Semillon and Sauvignon Vert (the last being practically non-existent in the U.S.). No single variety may make up more than 90 percent of the blend.

### **The Founding Vintners**

Agustin Huneeus, Quintessa; Julie Garvey, Flora Springs; Mitch Cosentino, Cosentino

### **The Current Leadership**

Julie Weinstock, Adobe Road Winery — Chairman

### **The Membership**

More than 200 wineries in 20 states, Argentina, Australia, Canada, France, Israel and Mexico.



## **The Milestones**

- 1988 Meritage Association is formed by a group of American vintners to identify quality, handcrafted blended wines made in the Bordeaux tradition.
- 1999 Meritage Association has fewer than 22 members. Association shifts focus from trademark policing to education and marketing.
- 2003 Association reaches 100 members and accepts its first Canadian members.
- 2005 Meritage Association accepts first memberships from beyond North America when wineries from Israel, Australia, and Mexico join the organization.
- 2006 The first winery from Argentina joins The Meritage Association
- 2007 Meritage Association surpasses 200 members
- 2008 Meritage Association celebrates its 20th anniversary and accepts its first member from France

## **Contact**

**Julie Weinstock, Meritage Association Chairman**

**Phone:** 707-939-7967

**FAX:** 707-935-5889

**Email:** [info@meritagewine.org](mailto:info@meritagewine.org)

**Website:** [www.meritagewine.org](http://www.meritagewine.org)

## **Media Inquiries**

**Jane Hodges Young**

**Labrador Communications**

**Phone:** 707-837-2735

**FAX:** 707-837-7935

**Email:** [jane@labradorcommunications.com](mailto:jane@labradorcommunications.com)