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# SHOOTING STAR MERLOT 2012

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## VINEYARDS

We are always on the lookout for classic varieties planted in ideal locations. The red volcanic soils, ample sunshine, almost no fog and the 1500 foot plus elevation and cool night temperatures, all add up to a wonderful place to grow red grapes. We harvest Merlot from the Dorn family and the Stymie Bench Vineyards. The Dorn's have the most dramatic vineyard in Lake County. Perched on a hollow on the NW corner of the dormant volcano Mt Konocti, you look down 1000 feet to the lake and see a perfect circle in Dorn Bay: an ancient cinder cone! The Stymie vineyard is a manicured jewel on the bench land near Highland Springs Reservoir, close to Lakeport. The soils are great and the vines really produce some of the best fruit we have ever seen from Lake County.

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## VINEYARDS & SEASON

2012 was a very good growing season with hardly any rain throughout the year and harvest. A beautiful spring and summer were followed by harvest conditions that were ideal, producing quality, focused wines.

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## WINE STYLE & TASTING NOTES

Merlot has always been a strong performer in Lake County. The wines are better structured and denser than a typical Merlot. An addition of Cabernet Franc helps balance the wine and gives it more fruit. We aged this wine in a combination of French and American oak for 8 months after an extended maceration on the skins to extract every ounce of flavor. Keeping in line with the fruit forward, easy drinking character of our Shooting Star wine, this wine has aromas of dark fruits and ripe Bing cherries, cassis and hints of earth. Lots of good fruit flavors and a touch of oak round things out and balance the firm yet supple tannins.

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## FOOD PAIRINGS

Serve with grilled duck breast with a cherry reduction sauce.



**APPELLATION** Lake County **HARVEST DATES** Sept. 18 & Sept. 27, 2012  
**ALCOHOL** 14.5% **BRIX** Average 25.5 **FERMENTATION** Average 18 days at 88°F  
**pH** 3.71 **TA** .59g/100mL **BARREL AGING** 8 months in French, and American oak; 20% new oak **VINE AGE** Avg. 15 years **YIELDS** 3-4 tons per acre  
**PRODUCTION** 1800 cases