



The Paloma Story

Founded by Jim and Barbara Richards and carried forward by their son Sheldon, Paloma Vineyard remains a true family operation. Today, Sheldon crafts the wines while his son Caston—the third generation at Paloma—serves as general manager and continues to learn the winemaking craft.

Our approach is hands-on and intentional: estate fruit is picked in small lots, fermented with daily hand punch-downs, and aged in a thoughtful balance of one third new and two thirds neutral French oak. The result is wines known for their smooth, velvety texture and layered complexity, vintage after vintage.

Paloma's 2,000-foot Spring Mountain estate defines its wines. Rocky volcanic soils, cool mountain breezes, and gentler temperatures than the valley floor—cooler days and warmer evenings—yield concentrated berries with vibrant aromatics, natural structure, and age-worthy elegance that clearly express a sense of place.

In 2003, Paloma Vineyard's 2001 Merlot was named ***Wine of the Year*** by Wine Spectator, chosen from more than 15,000 wines worldwide. Since then, Paloma Merlot has also appeared twice more in the Wine Spectator Top 100—2004 for the 2002 vintage (#54) and 2009 for the 2006 vintage (#65)—and in 2012 our 2009 Cabernet Sauvignon earned the magazine's Special Selection.



2021 Merlot

The 2021 Paloma Merlot opens quietly, with soft aromas of plum and cocoa. In the glass, it shows a clean, light red color. On the palate, it is smooth and approachable, with a medium body that carries notes of ripe fruit and subtle spice. Fine, peppery tannins add structure without overwhelming the wine's natural balance. The finish is long and graceful, leaving a lasting impression of elegance and freshness.

AVA	Spring Mountain District, Napa Valley	Vintage	2021
Blend	85% Merlot/15% Cabernet Sauvignon	Alcohol	14.8%
Cooperage	33% New French Oak (Nadalié)	Production	1708 Cases
Bottled	May 2023	Released	August 2025

Vintage Notes: Overall, 2021 was a strong vintage. A cooler spring led to a hot summer and fall. Fruit ripened smoothly with decent hang time and looked excellent coming in at harvest.

Winemaker's Notes: 2021 was a season we were grateful for. After losing the crop to smoke taint in 2020 to the Glass Fire, seeing the vines come back with such strength was a relief. The weather held steady—no wild swings, no extremes—and that steadiness makes all the difference. When a season gives you that kind of consistency, the vineyard really does most of the work. My job was just to stay out of the way and guide it along. The wines carry that story—generous, balanced, and a reminder of what a good year can give.

Aging Potential: Paloma wines have historically shown the ability to age gracefully for 20 to 30 years, though the exact arc depends on each vintage. The 2021 Merlot, with its balance of structure and fruit, is expected to reach peak expression at around 20 years.

Ratings & Reviews

Wine Spectator, *94 points*

"Rich and plush in texture, with generous, multilayered flavors of red currant and cherry laced with spicy cinnamon and mocha espresso. Finishes with polished tannins."

Wine Advocate, *93 points*



“Exotic rose-like floral notes emerge on the nose, joined by hints of mint, cherry tomato and red berries. In the mouth, the wine shows the silky, well-rounded characteristics of ripe Merlot, plump and full-bodied, with a lingering, supple, mocha-tinged finish. Pricing is very reasonable for the quality and pedigree.”

NY International Wine Competition, *95 points*

Under the Radar California, *Highest Rated Wine of the Event, Best in Class, Double Gold*