



L'ERMITAGE 1996

This Roederer Estate special *Tête de cuvée* has consistently been rated as one of California's top sparkling wines since its debut in 1989. This tradition of quality continues with the 1996 L'ERMITAGE.

After fruit set, the 1996 growing season was relatively warm. Picking began on August 14 and was completed September 19, 1996. The yield was abundant and grape quality was exceptional.

As in Champagne, only the very best lots are selected for the House's prestige cuvée, and L'ERMITAGE is made only with exceptional fruit. Roederer Estate wines are made with just the cuvée pressing; no *première* or *deuxième taille* is used.

The wines for the dosage and disgorging liquor added to the 1996 L'ERMITAGE were chosen from five different wines to find the best balance and complexity. We chose a 1994 wine liquor, aged six years in French oak casks. As with the previous vintages, the blend is specially crafted to increase the wine's ability to age. After disgorging, the L'ERMITAGE is aged at least six months in the bottle before release.

The 1996 L'ERMITAGE has excellent balance and great finesse. Winemaker Michel Salgues, with staff, characterizes this vintage as showing delicate apple and lemon characters, soft and fresh on the palate, with citrus and rich honey characters on a long finish. It is well balanced, with little acidity—an elegant and very complex wine.

Blend: Approximately 55 percent Chardonnay and 45 percent Pinot Noir, with 4 percent aged reserve wine.

En tirage: On the lees for four years

Disgorged: November 2000

Statistics: pH: 2.95
 Residual sugar: 1 percent
 Alcohol: 12.3 percent

Cases produced: 3,500 9L cases (12 x .750 L.)
 400 9 L. cases (6 x 1.5 L)

Release date: June 2001

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