



Gold Plus!

SCHUG WINERY 2013 MERLOT

Sonoma Valley



Walter Schug's winemaking career and accomplishments have been well-documented since the early 1970's. The German-born wine guru began turning heads when he served as the Founding Winemaker of the legendary Joseph Phelps Vineyards, one of the greatest success stories of the last quarter of the 20th Century. While at Phelps, Schug made California's first proprietary Bordeaux-style blend (Insignia) and also the legendary vineyard-designated Cabernet Sauvignons (Backus Vineyard and Eisele Vineyard). He was also responsible for making the first varietal Syrah wine in the United States, and he served as a pioneer in the development of Late Harvest dessert wines (Gewurtztraminer, Riesling and Schuerbe) that were incredibly popular in his native Germany.

As winemaker at Phelps, Schug distinguished himself as one of the premier winemakers in the country, earning critical acclaim with just about every major wine varietal. He started making his own wine on the side starting in 1979, after Phelps decided to end their production of Pinot Noir (his favorite varietal). He knew Pinot Noir had great promise, even though at the time, it wasn't particularly easy to sell to American consumers. By 1983, Schug was ready to leave Phelps and concentrate solely on his own wines, and Schug Winery became a reality.

Schug and his wife Gertrude chose the cool, marine climate of the Carneros appellation for their family winery. Their mutual love of Chardonnay and Pinot Noir led to this decision from which the Schugs never looked back. The pair of Burgundian varietals have remained at the forefront of Schug's wine portfolio, but he has since added small amounts of other varieties including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Sauvignon Blanc, Petit Verdot, and Cabernet Franc, all sourced from nearby vineyards in Sonoma Valley. The Schug Winery began as a small 2,000-case operation in 1983 and it has slowly grown to its present level of some 30,000 cases per year.

The year 2003 was one to note, marking Walter Schug's 50th harvest, which is a marvelous achievement that few California vintners can match.

Unfortunately for the wine community, Walter Schug passed away in 2015, just after celebrating his 80th birthday. His legacy has been carried on by his children, Alex and Claudia, who are both still active in the company, and his longtime friend and winemaker, Michael Cox. We are happy to share this world-renowned winery with our *Gold Plus! Wine Club* members.

Accolades and Tasting Notes

91 Points — *Wine & Spirits magazine*

Schug's 2013 Sonoma Valley Merlot is a classically structured wine crafted in the Bordeaux style that Walter Schug pioneered in California while winemaker of Joseph Phelps Vineyards. The Merlot grapes come from the prized Sangiacomo Vineyards in the Carneros District of southern Sonoma Valley, which is home to a cooler climate that allows Merlot to ripen slowly and develop maximum flavor, while also retaining good acid balance. This Merlot has a spicy bouquet, deep color and full-bodied flavors of cherry, blackberry and spice. Enjoy it with grilled fish, pasta, lamb and steaks. Aged 24 months in oak. 79% Merlot, 10% Petit Verdot, 7% Malbec, 3% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Cabernet Franc. Enjoy!



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