

the PICKS

FEATURE WINE

Longridge 2022 Merlot

Please don't quote Sideways at me because Merlot is having a moment right now... Longridge 2022 Merlot from Stellenbosch, South Africa, \$34.99 a bottle. We've carried Longridge's Cabernet before, but this is a first for the Merlot. I feel I should share this little blurb about Longridge itself: "At the heart of Longridge is Jasper Raats - winemaker, biodynamic pioneer, and a man whose roots run as deep in the soil as his wines suggest. Since 2011, he's been proving that Helderberg isn't just about powerful reds - it's a place capable of great delicacy, site expression, and purity. Certified organic and biodynamic, Jasper's approach blends science and faith, precision and intuition - resulting in wines that are thoughtful, honest, and quietly thrilling... some of the most exciting and soulful winemaking coming out of South Africa today." Sold? I am. This bottle is about 97% Merlot with the remainder Cabernet Franc. "This vintage delivered a savory nose and slight cedar characters. Ripe, yet soft tannins complement the aromas of plump, dark, red fruit and ripe strawberries with a hint of dark chocolate, cocoa, green herbs, and wet stones on the nose. Well-integrated vanilla oak and enough backbone to age further in the bottle."

WINE PICK

Textbook 2025 Sauvignon Blanc

A new California Sauvignon Blanc this week, the Textbook 2025 Sauvignon Blanc from Russian River Valley. Now the RRV is mostly known for Pinot Noir and Chardonnay, so this one is a little bit unique. The valley is situated at the southern end of Sonoma and is cooled by fog and breezes coming in from the Pacific, making it more akin to Marlborough or the Loire Valley than other parts of California, and we all know Sauvignon Blancs thrive in those locations, so that bodes well for this one. "This vibrant Sauvignon Blanc opens with expressive aromatics of white peach, citrus blossom, and crisp green apple, lifted by notes of key lime and subtle tropical tones. On the palate, bright Meyer lemon and grapefruit zest shine alongside a streak of clean minerality, delivering a refreshing, finely textured finish. Balanced and energetic, it captures a beautiful purity of fruit with lively acidity and precision." A small portion of it is also aged in French oak to add depth. That sounds about on par for the Fey family who owns Textbook, who traveled throughout Europe and made it their goal to create wines that unite the power of California fruit with the precision of European winemaking. So here we are with their Sauvignon Blanc, just \$19.99.