

**Fife Vineyards****2004 Merlot Reserve
(Spring Mountain District)**

Although there are dire predictions that the growing of Merlot will greatly diminish, especially in Bordeaux, due to climate change; and because of fickle consumer's disenchantment with it, I for one would be disappointed if the variety shriveled up and went away. One of the reasons for my sadness would be if Dennis Fife stopped making his Merlot Reserve. Produced from a few acres on his Spring Mountain vineyard at about 1,700 feet, this edition is a splendid reason why Merlot should proliferate instead of weaken. To do otherwise, would mean the public would be the losers.

The wine has deep black fruit and coffee aromas and is warm and smooth on the palate with some power, finely grained tannins and complex layers of earth and tar. It's drinking now but best to hold it for a year and then consume it over the ensuing dozen years. The wine was aged in used French barrels for 28 months, the stated alcohol is 14.4 percent and alas, there were only 84 cases produced.

Reviewed February 27, 2008 by [Alan Goldfarb](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Fife Vineyards](#)

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Merlot Reserve

Appellation: [Spring Mountain District](#)

Grapes: Merlot (95%), Cabernet Sauvignon (5%)

Price: \$60.00

THE REVIEWER**Alan Goldfarb**

Alan Goldfarb has been writing about and reviewing wine for 17 years. His reviews have been published in the *St. Helena Star*, *San Jose Mercury*, *San Francisco Examiner*, *Decanter*, and *Wine Enthusiast*, among others. Not once has he used a point system, star

system, or an iconic symbol to quantify a wine. What counts in Mr. Goldfarb's criteria when judging a wine is: how it tastes in the glass; is it well-constructed; its food compatibility; and presence of redeeming regional attributes.