

**Norman Vineyards****2003 No Nonsense Red Meritage  
(Paso Robles)**

Art and Lei Norman started out as growers on the west side of Paso Robles in the early 1970s. Their 40-acre vineyard was focused on red grape varieties like Cabernet Sauvignon and Zinfandel. After about 20 years, they decided to start producing their own wines, and the winemaker since 2005 has been Steve Felten. Although Felten's favorite grape variety is Zinfandel, he thinks the area is well-suited to Bordeaux blends - a view that's supported by this medium-bodied, easy-to-drink Meritage called No Nonsense Red.

The wine is a blend of 63 percent Cabernet Sauvignon, 23 percent Merlot and 14 percent Cabernet Franc, most of it from the estate vineyard. The components were aged separately for 20 months in 1- and 2-year-old French and American oak, then blended just before bottling. The result is a wine that offers bright flavors of cherry and plum, along with a slight earthiness and hints of anise and spice. The tannins are firm but manageable, making it a good partner for any sort of meaty dish. The wine has a no-nonsense price, too, at just \$20.

Reviewed February 20, 2008 by [Laurie Daniel](#).

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**THE WINE**

**Winery:** [Norman Vineyards](#)

**Vintage:** 2003

**Wine:** No Nonsense Red Meritage

**Appellation:** [Paso Robles](#)

**Grapes:** [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (63%), [Merlot](#) (23%), [Cabernet Franc](#) (14%)

**Price:** \$20.00

**THE REVIEWER****Laurie Daniel**

Laurie Daniel, wine columnist for the *San Jose Mercury News*, has been reviewing wine for more than 10 years. She doesn't use numbers, preferring to describe her recommended wines and let consumers decide for themselves.

Laurie believes that bigger isn't necessarily better; she's partial to wines of balance, finesse and character. Her particular interests are Pinot Noir (versions that really taste like Pinot, that is) and aromatic whites like Sauvignon Blanc, Riesling and Gewürztraminer.