

**Ironstone Vineyards****2004 Reserve Cabernet Franc
(Sierra Foothills)**

Cabernet Franc, a classic Bordeaux blending grape, can be risky business as a stand-alone varietal offering but pleasantly enough, Ironstone Vineyards has hit one out of the park with its 2004 Reserve Cabernet Franc. Ironstone's 58 acres in Murphys focus on Bordeaux varietals and the winery has been bottling a reserve Cabernet Franc for the past ten years.

Steve Millier, vice president and director of winemaking at Ironstone, is a fan of Cabernet Franc and says it adapts well to the Calaveras County appellation growing conditions. "Cabernet Franc has a bad reputation. It is a tough grape, very hearty and it tends to overcrop so it does not develop full flavors," says Millier. "However, in Calaveras County, we have a shorter grape growing season and we control the water and do vigilant management to control the yield. "The result is, we get nice ripe flavors and when

people taste it they cannot believe it is Cabernet Franc," he explains.

The 2004 Reserve Cabernet Franc has robust but soft tannins with a reasonably long finish, top notes of black cherry and plum, and hints of cinnamon, bramble brush and earth – somewhat of an Old World palate, but in a good way! The earthiness and minerality are classic of the appellation terroir in Calaveras County, says Millier, and those notes can be found across the Ironstone Reserve portfolio, he adds. A well done but unpretentious wine to be paired beautifully with Middle Eastern curries.

Reviewed June 13, 2007 by [Jean Deitz Sexton](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Ironstone Vineyards](#)

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Reserve Cabernet Franc

Appellation: [Sierra Foothills](#)

Grapes: [Cabernet Franc](#) (78%), [Cabernet Sauvignon](#) (15%), [Merlot](#) (7%)

Price: \$28.00

THE REVIEWER**Jean Deitz Sexton**

Jean Deitz Sexton's first experiences with wine were drinking Italian wine as an NYU college student in New York City. She continues to have a love of red wines with a reasonable alcohol level, that have rich flavor, good fruit yet softness. Deitz Sexton has a great fondness for Rhone varietals, anything with bubbles and of late, is obsessed with blends. Her approach to wine reviewing is pretty straightforward: does it have a pleasant nose, clarity of flavor, interesting notes, good mouth feel, and a satisfying finish?