

**Nickel & Nickel****2004 Merlot, Suscol Ranch
(Napa Valley)**

This is one of three Merlots from Nickel & Nickel, whose raison d'être – perhaps more than any other American producer – is single vineyard wines. The Suscol Ranch in the on-the-rise but little-known Jamieson Canyon area is a nine-acre vineyard. Located in the southern part of the Napa Valley near the airport, the area is gaining respect for its cool Merlots and Pinot Noirs.

This Merlot has loads of blackberry jam aromas and soft, elegant fruit in the mouth with very nice balance. It's not a long-term wine but one that will retain its vibrancy for another six or seven years.

The vines are planted on a windy, north-facing knoll of deep, loamy, Haire series soils, which are moderately well drained and found on old terraces and alluvial fans. Deposits of weathered sedimentary rock are typical. The wine was aged in 45 percent new French barrels, with the rest once-used. There were 821 cases produced.

Reviewed April 11, 2007 by [Alan Goldfarb](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Nickel & Nickel](#)

Vineyard: Suscol Ranch

Vintage: 2004

Wine: Merlot

Appellation: [Napa Valley](#)

Grape: Merlot

Price: \$55.00

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.