



## Iron Horse Vineyards 2003 T-bar -T Benchmark Technical Data

**Appellation:** Alexander Valley, Sonoma County.

**Winemaker's Tasting Notes:** The name says it all. Our first vintage of Benchmark was 1997. The next was 1999, which Robert Parker lauded with a '90-point" rating a "Bravo!" Then 2002, an exceptional vintage. We will only name a wine Benchmark when it meets or exceeds the standards set by that first vintage. Every barrel is cherry picked to create this blend. The flavors are intense black berry, cedar, vanilla and black pepper. Production is very limited.

**Precision Farming:** Precision farming is a fact-based wine growing philosophy that utilizes the latest technology - GIS/GPS mapping and CAD computer models - focusing on smaller and more tightly delineated vineyard blocks by soil type, aspect and elevation. All pruning, canopy management, irrigation, cover crop and harvesting decisions are determined on a block-by-block (and sometimes even vine-by-vine) basis, considering both the vintage at hand and the long term needs of the land. We use the best tools technology provides and up to date viticulture - balanced by our 30 years of experience and thriving passion.

**Vineyard Specifics:** The grapes for this wine come from the T-bar -T Vineyard in the northeast corner of the Alexander Valley, first planted in 1968. The property sits in the foothills rising to an elevation of 800 feet. It is very steep and rugged, yielding intense and exceptionally luscious fruit.

**Average Age of the Vines:** 11 years at harvest. Most of T-bar -T was replanted in the 90s due to Phylloxera.

**Harvest Dates:** September 20, 25 and October 14, 2003

**Winemaking Techniques:** Hand picked grapes are de-stemmed into stainless steel tanks where they are cold-soaked for seven days. When fermentation is half way complete, the new wine is pressed gently from the skins and transferred to French and American oak barrels. Fermentation goes to completion in the barrels where the wine is aged until blending and bottling.

**Barrels:** French and American oak  
**Blend:** 54% CS, 33% PV, 13% CF  
**Malolactic Fermentation:** 100%  
**Date Bottled:** March 2005  
**Residual Sugar:** Dry

**Alcohol:** 13.6% v/v  
**Acidity:** 0.67 g/100ml  
**pH:** 3:36  
**Release Date:** TBD  
**Total Production:** 195 cases  
**Suggested Retail Price:** \$70/bottle

**Food Pairings:** Sliced New York strip steak, pepper steak with french fries, grilled rack of venison served with a fresh onion tart, blue cheeses like our current favorite, Humbolt Fog.



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