

# ST. FRANCIS WINERY & VINEYARDS

## 2003 MERLOT

### *Behler Reserve* SONOMA COUNTY

**HARVEST** October 2003

**AGING** Twenty-four Months

**STORAGE** French Oak

**pH** 3.75     **TA** 0.68g/100 mLs

**BOTTLING** March 2006

**ALCOHOL** 14.5% by volume

**AGING POTENTIAL** 10+ years

**CASES PRODUCED** 505 cases

A superb Merlot, named in honor of the Behler family, who first cultivated a portion of the rich Sonoma Valley floor land in the early 1900's. The land is recognized as St. Francis' original estate vineyard and winery site. The 2003 Behler Merlot is a full-bodied concentrated Merlot, more Cabernet-like in character than some of their softer kin. A temperate spring produced grapes with firm tannins, while hot weather during the final stages of maturation resulted in a ripe, syrupy fruit profile. Our Sonoma County Merlot was hand-picked in late September, the fruit was crushed, fermented, pressed, then racked into 50% new French oak and 50% one to two year old French oak barrels. To complement the plum and strawberry flavors and the luscious mouth feel of the Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon from our Nuns Canyon, Rockpile and Kings Ridge vineyards were blended into the final cuvée two months prior to bottling in March of 2006. The wine was then held for an additional 12 months before release.

