

# ST. FRANCIS WINERY & VINEYARDS

## 2009 MERLOT SONOMA COUNTY

**STORAGE** 80% French & 20% American Oak

**AGING** 20 Months in barrel

**BOTTLING** August 2011

**ALCOHOL** 14.5% by volume

**AGING POTENTIAL** 5 to 6 years

**BLEND PERCENTAGE** 76% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon, remainder a blend of Malbec, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot

### VINTAGE

An ideal growing season with mild summer temperatures, 2009 produced exceptional fruit. After a dry winter and budbreak in early March, heavy rains in May gave soil much needed moisture. After two weeks of warm, sunny days, the weather cooled to below normal temperatures that lasted throughout the summer. With none of the usual heat spikes, the fruit ripened slowly, developing focused flavors and complexity.

### WINEMAKING

The majority of grapes in our Sonoma County Merlot come from our estate vineyards in Sonoma Valley, as well as from growers in Sonoma County's other top appellations. Each carefully selected vineyard contributes distinctive and individual qualities to the finished wine.

All grapes are hand-picked, gently de-stemmed and crushed before cold-soaking for three days to extract optimal color and flavor. The fruit is then inoculated with many different yeast strains to build complexity, then fermented in separate lots using a combination of pump overs and delestage to soften tannins. Secondary malolactic fermentation occurs in 80% French and 20% French oak barrels – 15% new.

### TASTING NOTES

This Merlot is smooth and elegant with classic flavors and aromas of cherry, red licorice, currant and dried cranberry. Its silky structure is balanced by soft tannins and a bold, lengthy finish.