

# ST. FRANCIS WINERY & VINEYARDS

## 2010 MERLOT SONOMA VALLEY

**STORAGE** French & American Oak

**AGING** 20 Months in barrel

**BOTTLING** August 2012

**ALCOHOL** 14.2% by volume

**AGING POTENTIAL** 5 to 6 years

**BLEND PERCENTAGE** 87% Merlot, 6% Cabernet Sauvignon, remainder a blend of Malbec, Cabernet Franc and Petit Verdot

### VINTAGE

Mother Nature didn't make it easy in 2010, but it was all worth it in the end. A long, cool growing season slowed everything down, which delayed ripening but gave fruit plenty of time to develop complex flavors and aromas. A heat spike in August allowed grapes to reach full maturity with outstanding quality and sugar levels slightly lower than usual. As a result, our wines exhibit true elegance, balance, and rich, concentrated flavors.

### WINEMAKING

The majority of grapes in our Sonoma Valley Merlot come from our estate vineyards in Sonoma Valley, as well as other top growers in the area. 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% American 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.