



## 2012 MERLOT

Mitsuko's Vineyard, Carneros, Napa Valley

**G**ROWING MERLOT IN MITSUKO'S VINEYARD for over a decade has taught us how to express the depth and elegance of this variety. The vineyard is comprised of five different Merlot clones which reveal slightly different dimensions of the variety. The microclimate and soil type of each parcel, along with the varied spacing and rootstocks, provide the grapes with greater complexity of flavor.

### HARVEST NOTES

2012 began with a droughty, warm winter and early spring, accelerating budbreak by one week and resulting in an even and fertile bloom. Warm temperatures continued into the late spring and early summer without significant heat events, prolonged cool periods or measurable rainfall—essentially perfect weather for winegrape growing at the highest level. The combination of warmer days and cooler nights ensured full ripeness of the fruit both in terms of fruit flavor development and tannin maturity together with acidity retention, so crucial for fine wine balance. Fruit quality proved superb across all varieties.

### WINEMAKER NOTES

Cool night-harvested Merlot prolonged pre-fermentation cold maceration, which permitted easy extraction of color and flavor compounds from the grape skins during fermentation. Extraction was individually tailored by wine lot, the wines receiving on average one month on the skins to optimize aromatics and fully extract and develop tannins. The 2012 wines lots were racked twice, once in early March 2013 and then again prior to bottling. In May of 2014, the wine was racked up to tank after total *élevage* of 18 months in our caves before bottling in June 2014. The 2012 vintage was of such high quality for Merlot, that it is the rare vintage that is unblended with other Bordeaux varieties.

### TASTING NOTES

Our 2012 Mitsuko's Vineyard Merlot is a deeply-colored, exotic and complex wine, possessing aromas of *crème de mure*, black cherries, licorice and wild violets, enhanced by nuances of fresh pipe tobacco, cedar and slate. The wine fills the mouth with broad and dense fruit flavors, counterbalanced by a plush structure, energetic acidity, substantial mid-palate volume and a lengthy mineral-driven finish.

## TECHNICAL INFO

### VARIETAL COMPOSITION

100% Merlot

### CLONES

Pomerol massale selection

### VINEYARDS

100% Mitsuko's Vineyard Carneros – Napa Valley

### SOIL

Haire clay-loam and Haire Gravelly Clay-Loam

### HARVEST DATES

October 20

### AGING

18 months in 46% new French oak

### BOTTLING DATE

June 2014

### ALCOHOL

14.9%

### RESIDUAL SUGAR

0.08% (dry)

### PRODUCTION

312 cases

### OPTIMUM DRINKING

Now–2020