



## 2008 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

Budbreak was slightly later than average, and an early spring frost soon after budbreak dramatically reduced Merlot crop levels in Mitsuko's Vineyard. The interval was short before flowering and fruit set period in late May, punctuated by a heat spell in the high 90s and brisk winds. The warmth certainly encouraged fruit-set, and all varieties were completed in less than ten days after bloom, giving great consistency to the individual berry development. The harvest commenced after a heat wave in late August/early September though the weather then moderated to a long and mild fall. Historically low crop levels in Merlot resulted in wines of magnificent concentration.

### WINEMAKER NOTES

Fermentation was conducted with indigenous yeast adding complexity of flavor and reinforcing the *terroir*. Extraction was individually tailored by wine lot, with the Merlot and Malbec receiving on average three weeks on the skins to optimize aromatics and charm yet fully extract and develop tannins. The 2008 wines were racked three times, once each in the winter, spring and summer of 2009. In March of 2010 the wine was racked up to tank to prepare for bottling after total *élevage* of 18 months in our caves before bottling in April 2010.

### TASTING NOTES

Our 2008 Mitsuko's Vineyard Merlot is a deeply colored wine demonstrating bold and exotic aromas of fresh black cherries, plum jam and wild violets enhanced by nuances of incense, graham crackers and fresh pipe tobacco. This voluptuous wine fills the mouth with concentrated bright fruit counterbalanced by a broad rich structure, substantial mid-palate volume and a lengthy satisfying finish.

## TECHNICAL INFO

### VARIETAL COMPOSITION

98% Merlot  
2% Malbec

### CLONES

**Mitsuko's Vineyard Merlot:**  
Clones 6 and 181; Pomerol and Rucedo massale selections

**Mitsuko's Vineyard Malbec:**  
Clone 595

### VINEYARDS

Mitsuko's Vineyard Carneros

### SOIL HAIRE CLAY-LOAM

**HARVEST DATES**  
October 16–28

**FERMENTATION**  
100% indigenous yeast

**AGING**  
18 months in 23% new French oak

**BOTTLING DATE**  
April 2010

**ALCOHOL**  
14.3%

**RESIDUAL SUGAR**  
0.05%