



## 2010 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

Rainfall returned after several drier-than-average dry years, and this wet weather combined with very cool spring growing conditions pushed bud break, flowering and fruit-set back by at least two weeks. Cooler weather in the early summer maintained the 10 to 14 day lag into veraison. This cool season was punctuated by a two-day heat spike, with grapes at various sites experienced some sunburn, which then required subsequent removal prior to harvest. Cooler than average temperatures returned again in early September, but gave way to a welcome, warm Indian Summer, resulting in optimal flavor maturity.

### WINEMAKER NOTES

Mitsuko's Vineyard Merlot blocks, planted on gravelly well-drained soils in cool Napa Carneros, produce wines of intensity and volume which retain appealing freshness and natural acidity. Mitsuko's Vineyard Malbec planted on similar soils exemplifies the plummy fleshiness inherent in the variety. Tenma Vineyard produces Cabernet Sauvignon wines of deep color and intensity, contributing structure and spice to the Merlot blend. Individual lots were racked at the completion of malolactic fermentation. In summer of 2011 the wines were re-evaluated and individual lots were racked as needed. The finished wine blend was put up to tank in mid-February 2012 after a total *élevage* of 15 months.

### TASTING NOTES

Deep purple ruby in color, this wine has exotic dark fruit notes of black cherry, plum and cassis framed by violets, Darjeeling tea, graphite and a touch of sweet incense. This substantial Merlot deftly balances voluptuous fruit, supple ripe tannins and broad mid-palate volume with a lengthy dark fruit and cocoa finish counterbalanced by a prominent minerality.

## TECHNICAL INFO

### VARIETAL COMPOSITION

Merlot (80%)  
Malbec (10%)  
Cabernet Sauvignon (10%)

### CLONES

Merlot – Clones 3, 6 and 181; Pomerol massale selections  
Malbec – Clone 595; Cabernet Sauvignon – 7 and 337; Montelena massale selection

### VINEYARDS

Mitsuko's Vineyard Carneros 90%  
Tenma Vineyard 5%

### SOIL

Mitsuko's Vineyard: Haire Gravelly Clay-Loam; Tenma Vineyard: Bale Gravelly Clay-Loam,

### HARVEST DATES

October 20–28

### AGING

15 months in 32% new French and 5% new American oak

### BOTTLING DATE

April 2012

### ALCOHOL

14.5%