



2011 MERLOT

Mitsuko's Vineyard, Carneros, Napa Valley

GROWING 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

2011 began with a cooler-than-average winter and spring, accompanied by intermittent rainfall which naturally thinned crop levels through berry shatter. Following delays in bud break, flowering and fruit-set, warmer summer temperatures together with an absence of heat spikes moved grape maturity forward through veraison in an ideal manner. Following an ideal early harvest period, rains began arriving in early October, requiring removal of weather-damaged clusters and additional leaf pulling to expose clusters to drying breezes. The well-drained soils of our Estate vineyards allowed us to weather the storms without quality impact resulting in a small crop of high quality fruit demonstrating great freshness, vibrancy and balance.

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, with the wines receiving on average one month on the skins to optimize aromatics yet fully extract and develop tannins. The 2011 wines lots were racked twice, once in early March 2012 and then again prior to bottling. In June of 2013 the wine was racked up to tank to prepare for bottling after total élevage of 19 months in our caves before bottling in July 2013.

TASTING NOTES

Our 2011 Mitsuko's Vineyard Merlot is an exotic and complex wine possessing aromas of crème de cassis, black cherry pie and wild violets enhanced by nuances of fresh pipe tobacco, cedar and slate. The wine fills the mouth with vivid fruit flavors counterbalanced by a round structure, substantial mid-palate volume and a lengthy mineral-driven finish.

TECHNICAL INFO

VARIETAL COMPOSITION

Merlot (76%)
Malbec (14%)
Cabernet Sauvignon (5%)
Petite Sirah (5%)

CLONES

Merlot – Clones 6 and 181; Pomerol and Raucedo massale selections
Malbec – Clone 595; Cabernet Sauvignon – Montelena massale selection; Petite Sirah – Madrigal massale selection

VINEYARDS

Mitsuko's Vineyard Carneros 90%
Tenma Vineyard 5%
Dunaweal Vineyard 5%

SOIL

Haire Clay-Loam, Haire Gravelly Clay-Loam, Bale Clay-Loam, and Sandy Clay-Loam

HARVEST DATES

October 15–30

MALOLACTIC:

100% indigenous bacteria

AGING

19 months in 32% new French

BOTTLING DATE

July 2013

ALCOHOL

14.5%

RESIDUAL SUGAR

0.048%