



## 2010 *Merlot*

ESTATE GROWN ~ COLUMBIA VALLEY

- **COMPOSITION:** 93% Merlot, 5% Syrah, 2% Cabernet Sauvignon
- **AGING:** 29 months in French & American oak barrels
- **pH:** 3.78
- **TA:** 6.2g / 100mL
- **ALCOHOL:** 13.9%
- **PRODUCTION:** 3,800 cases

### VINTAGE

We cultivated our 2010 vintage during one of the coldest years in memory. Toward the end of August, later than we had ever seen, our grapes were just beginning to go through veraison, the change from hard green berries to soft plump fruit. With still no warm weather in sight we made the difficult decision to go through the vineyard and thin the crop. Wherever clusters were sitting on top of one another or the fruit load looked too heavy for the vine, we removed whole clusters of fruit. With less fruit to ripen the vines gradually picked up the pace but with the fall harvest looming we were still not sure the crop would ripen in time. Our prayers were finally answered when a beautiful Indian summer came upon us in September, with a week of +80oF weather and a week of +70oF, the grapes finished their ripening nicely. The result was fruit of exceptional character with an excellent balance of acidity and ripeness.

### WINEMAKING

Our goal in crafting the 2010 Merlot was to preserve and, if possible, enhance the character of the delicious fruit. Harvested in ½ ton picking bins, the fruit was brought directly from the field to the winery. To extract color and flavor prior to the onset of fermentation, the grapes were de-stemmed, crushed and pumped into our open top fermenters where we macerated the fruit for 24 hours prior to yeast addition. After we initiated fermentation, cap management began in earnest utilizing multiple techniques for cap management. “Drain and return” where the wine is completely separated from the grape and then pumped back over the top. “Pump-over” where we pull wine from the tank through an oxygenating screen and pump that wine back over the cap and the punch down, where the skins are pushed back down into the wine. This triple combination of techniques maximizes tannin extraction and cellar efficiency while adjusting to the unique character of each individual fermentation. Once the sugar consumption is complete, we press off the wine and place it into a mixture of French and American Oak barrels. Prior to bottling, 5% Syrah was blended in to elevate our Merlot’s fruit character and 2% Cabernet Sauvignon was added to bring nuanced depth.

### WINEMAKER COMMENTS

Wild rose growing in a forest glade. Mediterranean slopes lush and green, the heady fragrances rising in the summer’s heat. This vibrant collage of aromas alludes to the complexity of our 2010 Merlot. A deceptively soft attack masks the underlying structure, making this wine a chameleon capable of fitting in to any wine appropriate situation.

