

# ST. FRANCIS WINERY & VINEYARDS

## 2007 MERLOT SONOMA COUNTY

**HARVEST** October 2007

**AGING** 14 Months

**STORAGE** French & American Oak

**BOTTLING** March 2010

**ALCOHOL** 15% by volume

**AGING POTENTIAL** 5 to 8 years

### VINTAGE

“Slow and steady wins the race” was the mantra for the 2007 vintage. With an unusually dry winter and consistently moderate temperatures, the growing season was a bit longer than past vintages. It gave us an early budbreak and a long, even maturity that ended in September. Without the normal summer heat spells, most varieties came in with an elevated acid level and lower sugar. Fall came on-cue in late October, and some big rains early on told us to finish up and bring in any hanging fruit.

### WINEMAKING

Our well-known Merlot is produced and grown exclusively in Sonoma County. The majority comes from our Estate Vineyards, where the soil composition is distinctive and conducive to growing this type of varietal. The well-drained rock, gravel and loam topsoil produces moderate yields of highly concentrated fruit. In mid summer, the canopies are thinned to increase sun exposure and nurture fully mature grapes. In early October these grapes reached their ideal ripeness at 25 Brix. They were hand-harvested early in the morning, so they were cool to the touch when arriving at the Winery, then gently de-stemmed and crushed into their own tanks. Each vineyard lot went through a 10-14 day fermentation, followed by a 20 day malolactic fermentation. The lots were then racked to barrels and kept separate throughout the ageing process, until blending a year later. Once the blend was decided, the wine went back into barrel allowing the flavors to fuse together before bottling.

### TASTING NOTES

Characteristic cherry and chocolate light up the palate of this classic Sonoma County Merlot. Flavors of coffee and luscious plum in the mid palate solidify its structure and give it depth, while its round, generous tannins deliver a bold, lengthy finish.