

1996 Merlot Michael Black Vineyard Napa Valley

VINEYARD

- ◆ OWNERS/MGR: MICHAEL BLACK
- ◆ APPELLATION: HILLSIDE, ROCKY, VOLCANIC TUFT
- ◆ CLONES: BLACK ON 420A, CLONE 1 ON 101-14
- ◆ AGE: 10 YEARS
- ◆ SITE: THE MICHAEL BLACK MERLOT VINEYARD IS LOCATED IN THE COOMBSVILLE AREA, IMMEDIATELY EAST OF THE TOWN OF NAPA. THE HILLSIDE SOILS ARE ROCKY AND LOW IN ORGANIC MATERIAL, VOLCANIC TUFT. VINE DENSITY IS 1000 PLANTS/ACRE.
- ◆ YIELD: LESS THAN 3 TONS/ACRE

HARVEST

- ◆ HARVEST DATE: SEPTEMBER 1 AND 9, 1996
- ◆ HARVEST BRIX: 23.5 AND 24.8
- ◆ GROWING SEASON: EXCELLENT GROWING SEASON; EARLY BUD BREAK DUE TO WARM SPRING TEMPERATURES LED TO A LONG MATURATION PROCESS. THIS LONG, WARM SUMMER GAVE THE FRUIT TIME TO RIPEN GRACEFULLY AND FULLY EXPRESSING THE UNIQUE COMBINATION OF OLD VINES, ROOTS TRANSLATING TERROIR.

WINEMAKING

- ◆ HAND HARVESTED GRAPES
- ◆ GRAPES DESTEMMED AND PLACED UNCRUSHED IN AN OPEN-TOP STAINLESS STEEL FERMENTOR
- ◆ FERMENTED WITH PUNCHDOWN CAP MANAGEMENT
- ◆ THREE WEEKS TOTAL MACERATION
- ◆ BASKET PRESSED
- ◆ 18-MONTHS IN FRENCH OAK BARRELS, 58% NEW, MALOLACTIC IN BARRELS
- ◆ UNBLENDED, UNFINED, UNFILTERED; BOTTLED AUGUST 1998

TASTING NOTES

- ◆ THIS MERLOT HAS REMARKABLE CONCENTRATION, DEPTH AND PURITY OF RED AND BLACK BERRY FRUIT, INTERLACED WITH NUANCES OF SPICE AND VANILLA FROM OAK. RICH AND SENSUOUS ON THE PALATE, THIS WELL-BALANCED WINE COMPLEMENTS A WIDE ASSORTMENT OF FULL-FLAVORED PASTAS, MEAT AND CHEESE DISHES. SERVE AT CELLAR TEMPERATURE. ALCOHOL 13.6%.
CELLARING: EXCELLENT NOW THROUGH 2005.
983 CASES PRODUCED.