

ABEJA



2008
MERLOT

VARIETAL COMPOSITION: 100% Merlot
VINEYARD SOURCES: Sagemoor Farms: Bacchus & Dionysus
APPELLATION: Columbia Valley
HARVEST DATES: September 17, 2008 – September 22, 2008
OAK COMPOSITION: 90% French, 10% American;
60% new, 40% one & two year old
BARREL AGING: 18 months
CHEMISTRY: Alc. 14.8%, pH 3.78, TA .54 g/100ml
BOTTLING DATE: March 12, 2010
RELEASE DATE: November 1, 2010

The 2008 growing season was different from the previous four vintages. A cool, wet spring fortunately gave way to ample warmth and an extended warm fall, allowing the sugars and flavors to reach maturity. Merlot excels in the cooler years like this, and even though we began harvest two weeks later than usual, the fruit was flavorful, complex, and delicious. This Merlot is a little unusual because it is our first without any Cabernet Franc in the blend. In all of our tastings and blending trials, the Merlot was so expressive that we preferred it without any other varietal added. This bottling is also one-hundred-percent from Sagemoor Farms, where, together with their talented staff, we continue to work on the common goal of growing increasingly better fruit each year.

“The proof is in the pudding,” as my grandfather always said. He liked wine and pudding, and I am pretty sure this Merlot would have met with great approval from him. The nose is expressive and hints at the density in the mouth. I like the blueberry and blackberry characters that meld with the espresso and wood spice aromatics. The tannins are apparent, yet polished and pleasing. This is a wine that will age well and can easily be paired with many different cuisines.

I recommend thinking of food pairings outside the box. I like one-pot cooking, as you can feed a crowd and clean up easily. Try chipotle roasted chicken with potatoes, short rib stew, or sloppy joes. Merlot can even cross over into seafood. A gently spiced paella would be delicious, especially during the cooler months.

I made some eighties music recommendations with our last Merlot and they were well received, so I will stay in the same vein. Try the Talking Heads album, *Little Creatures*, and *Message in a Bottle* by The Police. *Ooh La La* by The Faces and *Close to Me* by The Cure would also be excellent choices.

John Abbott – Winemaker