

# ABEJA



2009  
MERLOT

**VARIETAL COMPOSITION:** 100% Merlot

**VINEYARD SOURCES:** Heather Hill & Sagemoor Farms: Bacchus

**APPELLATION:** Columbia Valley

**HARVEST DATES:** September 4, 2009 – September 23, 2009

**OAK COMPOSITION:** 90% French, 10% American;  
60% new, 40% one & two-year-old

**BARREL AGING:** 13 months

**CHEMISTRY:** Alc. 14.6%, pH 3.73, TA .56 g/100ml

**BOTTLING DATE:** December 15, 2010

**RELEASE DATE:** October 1, 2011

The 2009 growing season broke a string of more predictable and winemaker-friendly vintages. The season started out with a late bud-break, which was followed by late spring and early summer temperatures that were some of the warmest on record. September moderated, which allowed for the flavors to catch up with the rapidly increasing sugars. Then an early frost on October 11th brought harvest to a halt, but the early warmth meant the fruit was already in the door at the perfect level of ripeness. Also, most of the red varieties ripened at about the same time, which challenges fermentation space and cellar management, but in the end the vintage resulted in beautiful wines.

This vintage of Merlot has powerful aromas of sweet fruit and spice. Bing cherries, dark plums, milk chocolate, and espresso are classic descriptors for our Merlots. The 2009 takes it a bit further with black-cap raspberries and wild mountain strawberries. There is also an earthen, mineral character that works well with the wood tannin to bring balance to the big structure of the wine. This Merlot is our gentle giant. You can appreciate how big it is, be amazed by how much structure it has, and be happy with how smoothly it glides over the palate and on to the long finish.

Pair this wine with something flavorful. I am thinking anything grilled, smoked, or seared, and in particular duck and lamb. If you are lucky enough to be camping (even if it's in your own back yard!), try to save a bit for dessert, because it can enhance an already nice experience with a s'more, and at the very least, it is fantastic under the stars.

The music suggestion for this vintage comes from Molly, who loves the album *Medusa* from Annie Lennox, a compilation of songs you will likely recognize – though you might have forgotten them – performed only as Annie could.

John Abbott – *Winemaker*