



## 2006 JUSTIFICATION

### Vintage Summary

2006 began with consistent rain and cool weather. The vines, tired from the heavy 2005 harvest, awakened in early May with unusual warm weather for late spring. May, June and July averaged a high of 78 degrees. August and September lingered in the 85-degree range, helping achieve bright, ripe fruit character without picking based on concerns of too much sugar and high alcohol.

Rain showed its ugly face in late October, but our low yields had us 98% harvested before the storm hit. Harvest took place from late September through late October.

### Vineyard Practices

Aggressively pruning the vines helps focus the plants stored carbohydrates on promoting strong early growth in shoots. When shoots reach around 6 to 8 inches, we remove any growth not intentionally left at pruning. To help intensify color, ripen tannins and maintain healthy vines, we increased sun exposure and air circulation by removing laterals and creating a tunnel through the middle of the canopy. Merlot clusters tend to be large and have shoulders or wings. Prior to veraison, we removed these shoulders and wings to ensure we had even maturity throughout the vineyard. In the Cabernet Franc fields, we removed any green or pink colored fruit, which could result in unripe flavors. Due to a cool early Fall, extra crop was removed and resulted in yields of around 2 tons per acre.

Merlot, a thin-skinned variety, was harvested September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2006. Cabernet Franc needed a little more time in the sun to ripen its thick skins, and develop its hard green tannins into soft, supple, more palatable flavors. The Cabernet Franc was harvested October 28<sup>th</sup>.

### Winemaking Practices

A skilled crew handpicked the grapes into ½ ton picking bins. Once at the winery, our crusher-destemmer removed all of the stems and lightly crushed the grapes. The must (crushed grapes) was then placed in a stainless steel tank. UV-43 yeast, a strain known for its intense cherry and berry characteristics, then fermented the wine to dryness over a ten-day period. The relatively early harvest of Merlot brought great acid levels, helping extract bright, intense color during fermentation. Two pump overs per day, plus occasional delestage (the process of racking the fermenting wine into another tank and returning over the top with a high powered pump) helped create the complexity and balance of this Merlot. The Cabernet Franc had a combined fermentation and maceration that lasted 3 weeks. The consistent year allowed us to extract the black fruit, earthy and leather characters from the ripe skins. Pump overs took place twice a day for all 21 days. Malo lactic fermentation took place in barrel and 53% new French Oak helped add depth to this Cabernet Franc/ Merlot blend. The wine was blended in August of 2007 and then returned to barrel for an additional 10 months of oak integration and ageing.

### Tasting Notes

Aromas of raspberry, currant, black tar and light mineral characters make up the nose our 2006 right bank Bordeaux blend. The entry is bright with red fruit, soft, elegant and extremely approachable. The mid palate has good weight, and exhibits flavors of mushroom, wet stone, cedar and caramel. Slightly dusty tannins from the Cabernet Franc blend perfectly with vibrant fruit from the Merlot, to make this wine elegant and seamless from start to finish. The finish is a bit tight, showing the age worthiness of the wine. Drink now to 2020.

### Technical Information

Blend: 63% Cabernet Franc, 37% Merlot

Barrel aging: 18 months in 225-L oak barrels, 53% new

Blended: 8/12-8/13 2007

Harvest dates: 9/15-10/28, 2006

Brix at Harvest: 25.6

Harvest method: 100% hand-harvested

Fermentation: 8 to 12 days with UV-43

Maceration: 14 to 21 days including fermentation

Total Acidity: .63g/100ml

Pump overs: 2 times daily during fermentation

Racking: every 6 months

Barrel replacement: 40-50% annually on average

Fining: none

Filtering: none

Bottled: April 25, 2008

pH: 3.71

Alcohol: 14.5%

Barrels: Allier, Nevers

Yeasts: UV-43