



ARTESA

MERLOT

2005

CLASSIC



*The jewel of carneros*



*release date:* SEPTEMBER 2008

*varietal composition:* 15% MERLOT, 75% CABERNET SAUVIGNON,  
6% SYRAH, 5% CABERNET FRANC

*vineyards:* CARNEROS, SONOMA VALLEY, KNIGHTS VALLEY, SONOMA MOUNTAIN

*harvest:* OCTOBER 2005: 25.3° BRIX AVG. SUGAR AT HARVEST

*technical data:* ALC. 14.7% BY VOL.; 5,625 CASES PRODUCED

*cooperage:* AGED FOR 24 MON. IN 30% NEW, 70% USED FRENCH OAK

#### THE 2005 VINTAGE

The vines woke up early in 2005 getting an early start. May was very cool and wet, delaying bloom and harvest. This late start could have made for a problematic vintage, but an exceedingly benign and long Indian summer enabled harvest to last almost until Thanksgiving. We were able to harvest each vineyard block at its optimum ripeness. The grapes for this Merlot were picked during the second week of October, a full two weeks later than usual.

#### ABOUT THE VINEYARD

This Merlot comes primarily from the cooler portions of Sonoma and Napa Valleys. The cooler temperatures allow for more 'hang time' which produces more intense flavors and better tannin structure. The vineyards required some careful morning side leaf removal and irrigation management to ensure enough 'hang time' to get even and complete berry ripening. Too few leaves on the vine do not generate enough energy for world-class flavors and the berries may become sun burned, too many leaves and the berries end up shaded and not as fruity. The temperate application of irrigation water maintained a healthy canopy of leaves that survived the couple of heat spells we had. Extensive field testing and tasting determined the optimal day to pick.

#### WINEMAKING

The berries were gently de-stemmed and just barely split open. Fermentation occurred in temperature controlled stainless steel tanks. Full extraction of berry flavors and phenolics was accomplished through a combination of mechanical punchdown, gentle pumpover irrigation and delestage. A fifteen day post-primary fermentation extended maceration period built the mouthfeel and structure of this wine. The wine went directly to barrel and malolactic fermentation was finished in the barrel. The wines were racked several times to incorporate air into the evolving wine. Cabernet Sauvignon was blended in to enhance the wines structure. Cabernet Franc and Syrah were used to increase aromatic complexity and depth of flavor.

#### TASTING NOTES

Brimming with cherry, blackberry, currant and tree-ripened plum flavors. This satin soft wine has layers of clove, anise, vanilla and dark chocolate serving as delicious counterpoints to the persistent fruit flavors. Supple, mature tannins and a fruit-enlivening acid balance make for a long finish and guarantee that this wine will please for years to come.

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