



GROWING SEASON

The 2009 growing season commenced with an unseasonably warm spring and continued with an unseasonably cool summer and fall. Although Mother Nature delivered a non-threatening reminder of the devastating 2008 frosts, the green tissue of the newly exposed buds in March pushed through unscathed. The otherwise mild spring led to a healthy bloom in April, followed by a beautifully successful fruit set in May. Temperatures throughout summer remained favorably cool with no major heat spikes, allowing for a ripening season that can best be described as “even”—a simple word that means everything to a grower. The cooler climate slowed the ripening process, allowing the grapes to develop a greater depth of color, a more vivid varietal fruit character and silky elegant tannins while keeping sugar levels low and acids high. Rain in the forecast for mid-October attempted to dictate the timing of the harvest, and while nearly 4 inches fell on October 13, the decisions made in the vineyard to counter the precipitation allowed for some of the best fruit we have ever seen to be delivered to our sorting tables.

VINEYARDS

The final blend of 2009 Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon began with more than 60 different vineyard blocks—from our estate hillsides in the southern Alexander Valley to about a dozen family growers in the benchlands and hills east of Geyserville (primarily situated on the left bank of the Russian River) and two exquisite hilltop vineyards just outside the appellation. Each of these blocks was chosen for its potential to yield fruit of the highest quality and utmost finesse. Well-drained soils with the ideal calcium/magnesium ratio are a prerequisite in this selection process, but also of importance are the rootstock, grape variety clone, and vine row direction and spacing to best match the composition of each piece of land. The selection of a vineyard block is just the beginning; even if the grapes are chosen to be harvested, there are many more checkpoints to pass through before potentially becoming a component of Jordan’s final blend.

VITICULTURE

Although the vines made it through the early months without frost damage, the crew remained cautiously optimistic and endured a few sleepless nights, poised to respond; an experienced vineyard manager knows all too well that Mother Nature is in control at all times. While the evenness of the bloom and fruit set enabled the crew to make fewer passes through the vines than in 2008, precision viticulture was still practiced on a row-by-row and even on a vine-by-vine basis to make minute adjustments, ensuring that every cluster was ripening at a uniform pace, and held the perfect balance of fruit expression, acidity and tannin structure. Moderate temperatures persisted throughout the summer months—not too hot, not too cold. In response to these ideal growing conditions, the leaves of the vines were judiciously thinned—enough to allow the clusters to receive the sunlight and warmth needed to fully develop, but not too much that they would burn in the case of a heat spike. After the October 13 rain, the leaves were thinned out even more to promote the drying of the remaining clusters on the vines before their harvest. 2009 was a beautiful grape growing season.

HARVEST

Four inches of rain in the forecast for mid-October would usually be a sobering blow to an otherwise perfect growing season. Due to the detail-oriented viticulture practices precisely complementing the 2009 weather, most of the fruit from each of the 60-plus vineyard blocks had reached physiological maturity by October 12—the day before the rain. After the clouds parted, sunny skies dried out the remaining clusters and gave them the last burst of energy they needed to reach that “sweet spot” balance of sugar density, acid and tannin structure. The last grape hit the sorting table on October 22, giving a final average Brix of 24.3°.