



## GROWING SEASON

We couldn't say "good things come to those who wait" in 2014 because good things came early all year long. The final in a string of drought vintages, 2014 enjoyed dry, moderate weather throughout winter with superbly timed rainfall right before the early bud break in March. Spring conditions remained warm and dry, allowing the grapevines to bloom evenly. A cool snap in May was concerning, but warmer temperatures quickly returned, creating the most even flowering and fruit set I've seen in my career. Extremely dry weather continued in July and August with only a few heat spikes, allowing the crop to ripen uniformly. Two weeks of foggy weather at the end of August slowed down the very early progression of the vintage, before a heat wave over Labor Day weekend kicked harvest into high gear. Clusters looked gorgeous and had the kind of intense, fruit flavors that make for a dream vintage. Despite the drought, 2014 will be remembered as a three-peat winner of exemplary fruit, following the stellar vintages of 2013 and 2012.

## VINEYARDS

The final blend of 2014 Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon began with different vineyard blocks from Jordan Estate and 12 growers, primarily situated in the benchlands and hillsides of Geyserville, east of the Russian River. Our vineyard sites are selected because of their well-drained, gravelly soils in the warmer Alexander Valley, which allow the grapes to gain physiological maturity without sacrificing pure varietal character, bright acidity and moderate sugar levels. We also maintain an operating philosophy where growers are paid by the acre, not the ton, and are further rewarded for quality farming decisions. It is this necessary combination of climate, soil and husbandry that shares a common thread with the grand cru classé Bordeaux that inspire our style of winemaking.

## VITICULTURE

Like 2013, the 2014 vintage enjoyed consistent, moderately warm temperatures from late winter into early fall, which made farming decisions easy most of the year. Due to lack of rain and warm temperatures from bud break through bloom, the crop was average in size, affording us the flexibility to thin some clusters during veraison to concentrate the vine's focus on ripening a uniform crop. Canopy management was key to ensuring that the grapes enjoyed ample shade during the warmest days of summer. A mid-September rain with humidity caused concern that mildew treatment might be needed, but the weather was short-lived and interspersed with cool winds, mitigating any issues. The biggest challenge for farmers in 2014 was water due to the historic drought conditions, and several techniques to conserve water were employed, including experimenting with evapotranspiration transmitters to monitor the grapevine's water consumption rate.

## HARVEST

Patience was not a virtue in Alexander Valley during harvest. After the Labor Day heatwave, Merlot grapes were the first to be picked on September 2, 2014—about 7-10 days earlier than 2013, which was one week early. Gondolas of Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes continued to arrive at the crush pad before the first Russian River Valley Chardonnay night harvest. Juggling tank space in the fermentation room was a hectic art form for two weeks. The mid-September rain shower was a blessing in disguise, which slowed down the picking schedule for thick-shinned Cabernet Sauvignon, allowing the cellar team to finish primary fermentations and make room for the next wave of grapes. The entire harvest was finished by October 10, and we were beyond ecstatic with the quality of 2014 grapes that would follow on the heels of two phenomenal vintages.

*-Rob Davis, winemaker*