



## GROWING SEASON

The 2010 growing season was the definition of “cool climate” in an appellation known for its warmth. The quality of most vintages is determined by months of moderate weather; 2010 was measured in days. Spring was cool and rainy, which extended the bloom period. Fruit set was consistent with average-sized clusters. Cool temperatures and coastal fog lingered throughout the summer, raising humidity levels and thus increasing the incidence of mold and mildew. It was the coldest summer on record in the North Coast in 40 years. Luckily, the consistency of these cool temperatures in the months of June and July led to slow but even development in the Bordeaux variety grapes. Two heat waves arrived—one in late August and another in early September—quickly finishing the ripening period and kicking harvest into high gear. Then we had to wait for a minor rain to pass in late September. All our Bordeaux varieties were off the vine before the downpour in late October. This vintage was perfectly suited for the style of winemaking Jordan has always been committed to—wines naturally lower in alcohol with bright acidity and lovely spice notes.

## VINEYARDS

The final blend of 2010 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

The cool, humid conditions in 2010 forced our vineyard teams to combat disease pressure, primarily mildew, most of the season. We had to work closely with our growers and decide if we should pull leaves earlier in the season and open up canopies on both sides of the grapevines in June. Bordeaux varieties were leafed in the usual matter to offer dappled light exposure on the afternoon sun side of the vine, allowing for ample air flow and mitigating any threat of mildew and botrytis. The cool, damp weather continued, so growers and winemakers were nervous about grapes ripening before the October rains. In most vineyards, our winemaker and growers decided in late July to remove lateral shoots to aid airflow throughout the middle of the vine canopies. Gambling with decisions like these is why few growers spend their time in the local casinos. Hand-plucking of lateral shoots is one of the most expensive viticultural practices due to the intricacy and labor intensiveness, but in years like 2010, this technique was critical to ensuring a healthy, quality crop. When the heat waves hit in late August and early September, all varieties suffered some sunburn from the heat. The only choice was to remove those clusters that were sunburned—meticulous work that reduced the size of the crop, but greatness always comes at a price. A final thinning of sunburned grapes was completed prior to harvest. Our growers’ efforts clearly showed in the beauty of the fruit delivered to the hopper.

## HARVEST

Thankfully Cabernet Sauvignon—with its loose clusters and thick skins—is well-suited for a challenging year like 2010. After the second thinning of sunburned grapes, the pristine clusters from each of the 60-plus vineyard blocks were harvested, row by row or block by block, depending on physiological maturity, between October 2 and 22. The grapes were naturally lower in alcohol and higher in acidity with an average Brix of 24—ideal for Jordan’s house style. We finished harvest just one day before the big rain. Shorter days and colder nights set in over the soggy vineyards, and any chance for further fruit maturity was negated for other winemakers who prefer extended hang-time.