



## GROWING SEASON

Nature often rewards us with an excellent vintage the year after an extremely challenging one, and this was certainly the case in 2018. In many ways, it reminded us of the 2012 vintage—one of the best we've seen in more than four decades of winemaking. Bringing both phenomenal quality and a plentiful yield, this was the kind of year winemakers and grape growers wish for.

After years of drought, hot summers and early harvests, 2018 returned to what we call the “old normal.” Timing for the entire growing season ran three to four weeks later than in recent years and recalled classic vintages from the 1990s, when winter temperatures remained cool, and we received just enough rainfall. Bud break occurred at a more typical time in late March, and minimal rain and wind during May flowering resulted in a generous but not excessive cluster count.

The only real weather concern during the growing season was a single heat spike in June during fruit set. At that time, the crop size looked average. However, as summer progressed—with cool, foggy mornings in August and none of the typical late-summer heat waves—the clusters filled out beautifully, with more berries per cluster than usual.

With no threat of rain in early to mid-September, we had the luxury of waiting for the smaller berries to develop intense dark-fruit flavors and mature tannins.

## VINEYARDS

The final blend for the 2018 Jordan Cabernet Sauvignon began with 60 vineyard blocks from Jordan Estate and 14 family growers. Our vineyard sites are selected for 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. In order to ensure that we receive the best-quality fruit, Jordan's growers are paid by the acre rather than by the ton and are further rewarded for farming decisions that enhance quality. 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

Due to the similarities between the 2012 and 2018 vintages, we used the 2012 cluster weights to assess the crop level for the current vintage. However, rather than producing an average yield as we'd initially expected—yield estimation is far from an exact science—crop size was generous. This allowed the vineyard team to conduct an aggressive thinning early on, leaving us with beautifully uniform fruit. The fruit left on the vines continued to bulk up throughout the growing season, and cluster sizes in many blocks came in at a record high.

## HARVEST

Harvest for Jordan's red Bordeaux varieties kicked off on September 21. We had a bit of rain later in the month, but we like to say that thick-skinned cabernet sauvignon was born with a raincoat. October weather was glorious, with foggy, cool mornings and sunny days, bringing the bountiful 2018 harvest to a close on October 23. Grapes came in with beautiful aromas, rich flavors and deep fruit character. Despite the smaller berries and record-breaking cluster weights, depth of flavor was not impacted. The cabernet sauvignon and merlot grapes showed exceptional blackberry and cassis flavors and ideal natural tannins. We couldn't be prouder of the 2018 vintage.

*-Maggie Kruse, winemaker*