



## 1996 Sangiovese, Estate

As with all our wine varieties, our Sangiovese is produced from grapes grown in our own vineyards in westside Paso Robles, California. Sangiovese was planted after examining its:

- ◆ Appropriateness to our viticultural area, and our specific microclimate;
- ◆ Possibilities of achieving complex flavor.
- ◆ Being lighter-bodied, a good alternative wine for dining at the many restaurants serving lighter foods; and
- ◆ A good fit for our particular winery with its Italian tradition, a wine we can be enthusiastic about. The 1996 Sangiovese represents our 5th vintage of this variety. After veraison, the clusters were thinned by hand for optimal sun exposure of each cluster and an overall reduction of the crop by 1/3 to concentrate flavor and color in the remaining fruit. The growing season was near ideal with good warmth during the day, a 40 degree drop at night from the daytime temperatures to maintain natural acidity, and a long hang time until harvest to fully develop flavors. The grapes were hand-harvested on September 28th at a Brix of 23.0 and an acidity of 3.28 g/1. They were crushed at a cool temperature and placed in open top, 11/2 ton fermenters, where the cap was punched down by hand four times/day. After primary fermentation, the juice was placed directly into older oak barrels where fermentation was finished.

The wine aged in older oak barrels, blended with 16 Cabernet Sauvignon, until bottling on 8/29/98. This barrel age allows for concentration of the wine through the transpiration process. The use of older oak ensures that the fruit is not overwhelmed. No filtering nor fining was done in order to preserve the wine's fruity aromas. The wine continues to change and develop in the bottle as a result. Bottle aged at this date has given us a wine with strawberry and cherry, underlying cedar, with a balance of acidity. It pairs well with any tomato sauce of choice, or pork products such as tenderloin, ham or sausage.