



2009 EL DORADO RESERVE MERLOT

Sources: Gold Hill Vineyard

Harvest Dates: Sept 29, 2009 / Oct 25, 2009

Brix at Harvest: 27

Time in Barrel: 18 months

Type of Oak: Neutral French & American

Alcohol: 16%

Bottled: April 21, 2011

Production: 231 cases

Winemaker's Notes: This Merlot shows deep classic dark fruit, caramelized apple and powdery cocoa flavors that are redolent of the Right Bank of Bordeaux's Gironde River (not your Grandma's merlot). This is a powerful wine big and rich with huge fruit and low tannins.

The 30 year old Merlot vines in Gold Hill Vineyard, which overlook the American River Canyon in El Dorado County, enjoy warm days and cooling breezes at night. This micro-climate allows an optimal ripening cycle for the Bordeaux grape varieties and produces wines of great character.

The grapes were harvested by hand, lightly crushed, fermented in open-top tanks over seven days, punched-down by hand four times a day, lightly pressed and moved via gravity flow. The wine was racked five times and bottled after 18 months of aging in small oak barrels. It is unfinned and unfiltered.

The 2009 harvest was a challenge as all the grapes ripened at the same time while the weather was rapidly changing to winter. CBC received over 60 tons of grapes in a two week period. Fermentation process took 3-4 weeks per varietal. The wine was racked to clarity and bottled after 18 months.

The wine is a stellar example of Crystal Basin Cellars winemaking style. It is soft and approachable now but will improve in the cellar for many years. Perhaps the best Merlot in the Foothills region.