



# CLOS *du* BOIS®

## MERLOT 2011



### CLOS DU BOIS CLASSICS

Clos du Bois Classics wines are consumer favorites that reflect the winery's accessible and refined winemaking style. Working with a family of trusted growers and more than 500 acres of estate vineyards in the heart of Sonoma County, we craft each vintage to achieve balance, intensity, and true varietal character. Lush fruit flavors and a juicy, supple palate are the hallmarks of the Clos du Bois style.

### GRAPE SOURCE

In 2011, winemaker Gary Sitton sourced fruit for this wine primarily from select vineyards in California's North Coast. Harvest took place September 28 through November 3, 2011, with grapes registering an average of 23.5° Brix.

### VINTAGE

2011 was a challenging vintage on California's North Coast. We had similar conditions to 2010, with a cool, wet spring, and above-average rainfall into June. Rainfall during bloom resulted in a poor set, thinning the crop to less than 15% of normal. The light crop was a blessing in the cool, late season, as a light crop tends to ripen more quickly. With an abundance of available water, the vines produced lots of green growth, creating the potential for canopy imbalance with the light crop. Our estate vineyards and our grape growers worked diligently to balance the canopy to the fruit, through suckering, shoot-thinning, and leafing. Their diligence was rewarded with excellent flavor development in the grapes. A series of mid-October rain events presented further challenges, bringing harvest to rapid close. The resultant wines reflect the cooler vintage, with lively acidity and moderate alcohol levels favoring finesse and elegance over power.

### WINEMAKING

The grapes were machine harvested as well as harvested by hand. The wine was fermented on the skins in stainless steel tanks to dryness for about eight days, with pumpovers taking place three times a day. The wine was then pressed off the skins into oak to undergo 100% malolactic fermentation, with rack-and-return transfer done at the end of malolactic to get the wine off heavy lees. After 16 months in a combination of French, Eastern European, and American oak barrels (31% new) individual wine lots were racked and blended in July 2012 and prepared for bottling in May 2013.

### WINEMAKER NOTES

Following its deep ruby-red color, this velvety Merlot imparts aromas of black cherry, ripe plum, spice, and sweet tobacco. The black cherry, chocolate, and integrated toasty oak flavors are well balanced and concentrated. The rich finish is highlighted by supple tannins.

### FOOD PAIRINGS

This rich, balanced Merlot will pair nicely with a wide range of foods, including roast chicken and pork, or pasta with red sauce.

**WINEMAKER:** Gary Sitton

**VARIETAL COMPOSITION:** 92% Merlot, 4% Syrah, 1% Petit Verdot, 3% Other Reds

**APPELLATION:** North Coast

**ACID/pH:** 5.47g/L / 3.59

**RESIDUAL SUGAR:** Dry

**ALCOHOL:** 13.5%

**AGING:** French, Eastern European, and American oak (31% new)