



## FAMILY & HISTORY



Ray and Robin Merlo first started their professional lives in a field very different from winemaking; Ray as a medical doctor and Robin as a physician assistant. They started a family practice in Redding, California. Their first exposure to winemaking was from visiting family in Northern Italy in the mid '80's. "It was a revealing trip for us. All my relatives had small plots of land where they grew grapes for their own use," recounts Ray. "We visited the old family vineyard, which was planted by my great-grandfather and is still to this day maintained by my cousin. It was then that we thought we might like to continue this family tradition back home."

In the late 90's, the Merlos discovered Hyampom Valley, located in the heart of Southern Trinity County. "We just fell in love with the valley," says Robin, "the pristine water of the Trinity River surrounded by 6,000 ft. mountains is breathtaking." Merlo Family Vineyards produce several varietals, focusing on Chardonnay, Pinot Noir, Syrah, and Zinfandel. These varietals grow especially well due to daily inland temperatures that regularly reach 90 degrees and above. As a result of the strong coastal influences, each night the valley fills with cool, moist air, resulting in temperature fluctuations of up to 50 degrees. This contrast in temperatures creates wines with rich, complex tannins and firm structure. The surrounding hillsides are composed of native clay, while the valley floor is rich with alluvial soil composed largely of sands interlaced with gravel allowing for excellent drainage. These characteristics attribute to the richness and complexity of the wines.



The Merlos purchased Hyampom Valley Ranch and built a state-of-the-art winemaking facility, with the first bottling in 2004. Using the family name, Merlo—Italian for blackbird—Ray and Robin are now creating estate-grown wines that represent their winemaking heritage in a land they cherish. Merlo Family Vineyards is truly a family operation, with sons Raymond and Travis managing the operations and the marketing of the winery as it continues to enjoy healthy growth.

ESTATE BOTTLED AT THE HYAMPOM VALLEY RANCH, TRINITY COUNTY, CA