



## THE VINEYARDS



### *Hyampom Valley*

One of the most remote and most ideal, winemaking regions in California is the Hyampom Valley, a remote river valley situated within the 6000 ft. inter-coastal mountains of Southern Trinity County. Hyampom, the Wintu Indian phrase for "plentiful valley", is a fitting name. Located roughly 100 miles north of Sonoma and Napa Counties, Hyampom Valley's growing season is a full three to four weeks later than that of the better-known wine counties. This allows for much slower ripening, increased hang time and full concentrated flavors without over ripening or depletion of natural acids. The valley's wind and climate drives the terroir of the small mountain valley, causing the fluctuation in temperature and resulting humidity. Daily inland temperatures are regularly above 90 degrees F. Strong coastal influences each night fill the valley with cool moist air, resulting in daily temperature fluctuations of up to 50 degrees F. The contrast in temperatures creates a rich and complex tannin structure that gives the wines strong backbone.



### *Our Estate Vineyards*

The Merlo Family Estate Vineyards are located on the riverbanks of the wild and scenic South Fork of the Trinity River. These isolated vineyards are higher than most California vineyards at an elevation of 1,250 feet. Over 45 acres are currently planted with a variety of grape types using quality clone on terroir and site-specific rootstocks. The soils in our Estate Vineyards are of three distinctly different origins. The low-lying ground is young alluvial infill. Half of the vineyard is rock, gravel and sand deposited during the 1964 flood. These soils are mixtures of rock, gravel, and sand base with decomposed granite silts deposited in varying depths on the surface. The remaining soil is heavier native clay from shale origins that have been uniformly deposited from the shale cliffs behind the vineyard. All of the soils are well drained and are actively irrigated. The Hyampom Ranch is a fairly low vigor sight.



Afternoon winds and quick draining soils make routine irrigation necessary. From early June through August each block receives two weekly irrigations. In September, water is carefully monitored to keep plants under deficit irrigation



without compromising the canopy or fruit integrity. The vineyard is planted on 8'x6' spacing and production is kept to 2½-4 tons per acre. The vineyard is thinned prior to veraison to adjust the overall crop load. A second thinning pass is made after veraison to remove fruit that is damaged or behind in maturity. Merlo Family Estate Vineyards is actively cover-cropping to build organic matter resulting in increased nutrient and water holding capacities of the vineyard soils. Suitable nutrient cycles are planned with leguminous crops and the minimum of nutrient addition. The goal is to continue to use sustainable farming practices while improving grape quality; a commitment to responsible farming practices without losing focus on wine and grape quality.