



2006 *M* BY MICHAEL MONDAVI

**Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon**

100% Cabernet Sauvignon

100% Animo Vineyard

100% Atlas Peak

100% Napa Valley

**ANIMO VINEYARD**

Michael Mondavi's grandfather taught him as a boy that all great winemakers, first and foremost, have respect for their soil.

Making wine from the roots up, he said, is the only way to create a truly unique wine instilled with a sense of time and place.

Years later, when Michael chose the vineyard site for *M*, those words were not far from his mind. He named the vineyard "Animo" ("soul" in Italian) because of his belief that it clearly expressed *terroir* (or sense of place). This vineyard, high atop Atlas Peak on 15 acres of rocky, volcanic soil, would carry on its *terroir* through the vines into the grapes and, ultimately, finish in the glass.

**HARVEST NOTES**

The 2006 growing season in Napa Valley started slowly with a cold, wet spring, but caught up with a heat wave in mid-summer, and then ripened the grapes in Animo Vineyard in ideal conditions until harvest. Whatever the vineyard block configuration, the most important aspect is to harvest these grapes at the height of ripeness and ideal flavor. Michael, with the assistance of his son Rob and Tony Coltrin, spent countless hours walking, tasting, and flagging small areas to be harvested - the end of a few rows, a circular plot in the middle of a vineyard block, even just one side of the vines in an area - in order to achieve the absolute peak of balance, ripeness, and flavor, resulting in as many as twelve different picking days.

The prized Crown Block, utilized for one exclusive barrel of *M*, is located on a small knoll in the corner of the vineyard. It may take as many as three separate harvest days to provide the perfectly ripe and balanced fruit.

Animo Vineyard's 2006 harvest began in the higher-elevation Crown Block on October 20, and continued with the lower blocks through October 27.

#### **WINEMAKING**

The fruit's rich flavors, ripe tannins and balanced acidity enabled Michael to craft an *M* Cabernet Sauvignon of unmatched richness, elegance and harmony. After the grapes were gently hand-harvested and the individual clusters selected, they were destemmed and lightly crushed. The juice was fermented in small punch down tanks at 27-30°C. An extended post-fermentation maceration of 18-22 days fully married the wine's rich black fruit flavors and supple, sculpted tannins. The young wine was then moved to barrel for malolactic fermentation. During its 22 months in French oak barrels (85% new) the wine was racked several times. Determined by taste, the 2006 *M* received four rack and return movements. It was clarified with a light egg-white fining in barrel, using organic eggs, and spent 15 months in bottle prior to release.

Stylistically reminiscent of the legendary Mondavi cabernets of the late 1960s and early 1970s, crafted by Michael, *M* is a prestigious wine reflecting the *animo*, or "soul," of its maker: compelling, dynamic, and elegant.