



2009 *M* BY MICHAEL MONDAVI

Napa Valley Cabernet Sauvignon

Animo Vineyard, Atlas Peak

96% Cabernet Sauvignon

4% Petit Verdot

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 at an elevation of 1,350 feet 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 2009 growing season in Napa Valley was very mild early on, with cool temperatures slowly maturing the grapes up until dramatic rains in October forced winegrowers to decide between picking early or waiting out the rains. By carefully monitoring our *Animo* vineyard, we stayed patient and waited for the rains to subside and pick at optimum maturity. 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 nine different picks.

The prized Crown Block, utilized for one exclusive barrel of *M*, is located on a small knoll in the corner of the vineyard. It takes several harvest days to provide the perfectly ripe and balanced fruit from this block.

Animo Vineyard's 2009 harvest began in the higher-elevation Crown Block on October 3rd, and continued with the lower blocks through October 30th.

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 into small punch down tanks. After a five day cold soak period, the juice was fermented at 27-30°C. Extended post-fermentation maceration brings the total skin contact time to 28-32 days fully marrying 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 (87% new) the wine was raked several times. Determined by taste, the 2009 *M* received seven 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.