



## ***R & B Cellars 2010 Minuet in Merlot Napa Valley***



<b>Vineyards:</b>	Bingham Ranch, Napa Valley
<b>Composition:</b>	98% Merlot 2% Cabernet Sauvignon
<b>Harvested:</b>	October 2010
<b>Bottled:</b>	June 2012
<b>Released:</b>	July 2012
<b>Production:</b>	154 Cases
<b>Cooperage:</b>	100% French Oak 5 coopers, 100% new

### **Aged 20 months in brand new French oak**

#### **Vineyards**

Bingham Ranch is a gorgeous vineyard just to the south of the town of Calistoga. One of the oldest vineyards in Napa Valley, it has been in the same family for over 150 years. The Merlot vines are about 22 years old, trellised, and farmed with sustainable agricultural techniques. A small berry clone of Merlot, the fruit from this vineyard gives a rich intense wine and benefits from a later harvest date to achieve further concentration of flavors. The small amount of Cabernet Sauvignon is also from Bingham Ranch.

#### **The Wine**

Harvested in late October, the Merlot from Bingham Ranch was perfect. These vines are on a slight incline with greater drainage causing them more stress, thus intensifying the flavors. The end result of the quality of the fruit was outstanding and deserved to be handled in a very special way. Fruit was hand sorted, and then crushed and de-stemmed into half-ton macro bins. A three-day cold soak was done before fermentation. Hand punched down twice a day during fermentation and then gently pressed off and put into 100% French oak barrels. The wine was racked four times while aging in barrels, and then lightly filtered for bottling. The final blend was 98% 2010 Merlot and 2% 2009 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon from Bingham Ranch.

#### **Winemaker's Comments**

This is the quintessential Merlot for me. The bouquet is so intense and aromatic you almost do not want to drink it. Just revel in the exotic spice and stunningly rich perfume of the wine. The marriage of the fruit and the five very special French oak barrels resulted in the perfect balance of voluptuous fruit and bold structure. Rich and intense, this wine has wonderful balance. Blackberries, dark black cherries and currants are the predominant fruits in this rich, extracted wine. The French oak is the perfect compliment to the fruit, adding hints of chocolate and toasty vanilla tones in the finish. The wine starts with an initial explosion of black fruit, and then opens layer upon layer of rich fruit and spice, to a long and mouth filling finish.

**Gold Medal** – Tasters Guild Consumer Wine Awards

**Silver Medals** – San Francisco Chronicle Wine Competition / Tasters Guild International Wine Competition / Critics Challenge International Wine Competition