HARVEST NOTES
Despite the ongoing drought conditions in California, 2014 experienced a relatively normal growing season. With a dry, mild winter, the vines saw early bud break. Spring conditions were warm and windy, resulting in a bit of shatter and light fruit set. Temperatures warmed up in late spring and were consistent through September. This consistency brought an overall balance to the acidity and sugar levels, resulting in high quality fruit, with yields reduced by 20%.

WINEMAKING NOTES
After our Merlot was harvested and crushed, it was fermented in 20-40 ton, closed-top stainless tanks for 10-14 days. Daily pump overs enhanced color and tannin extraction. After fermentation, the wine was transferred to neutral French & American oak barrels and inoculated for malolactic fermentation. After an initial aging period of 8 months, the blend was assembled and put back into 50% new French oak barrels for 2 months. The final blend was cross-flow filtered prior to bottling in mid-August 2015.

TASTING NOTES
The 2014 Liberty School Merlot has a deep opaque ruby-black color. Bright blackberry and blueberry aromas fill the glass with an intriguing note of Rainier cherry alongside lavender, clove and a kiss of vanilla. On the palate, the dark fruit play out in concert with the cherry flavor, while accentuated by sweet vanilla and toasted oak. It’s firm yet velvety tannins are balanced by mouthwatering acidity and a long, silky finish.

TECHNICAL NOTES
Variatel breakdown: 100% Merlot
Vintage breakdown: 2014
AVA: Central Coast (52% Paicines, 28% Paso Robles, 20% Santa Ynez Valley)
Oak Program: 8 months in neutral French and American oak, 2 months in 50% New French oak prior to final racking and bottling
Length of Time in Oak: 10 months
Harvest Period: Mid-September to early October 2014
Filtered: Cross-flow
Total Acidity: 0.64g tartaric/100mL
pH: 3.60
Alcohol: 13.9%