When the search for great Zinfandel led us to Lodi, we saw vineyards that are among the oldest in California. The vines planted in these older vineyards are free-standing “head trained” vines that resemble wild bushes with twisted old trunks and branches that spread out in all directions like unruly umbrellas.

**CALIFORNIA 2015**
**MERLOT**

**Wine**
Gnarly Head 2015 Merlot breaks the Merlot mold and tells a story of power and finesse. Anything but classic, this wine shows off bold aromas of blackberry, baking spice and notes of vanilla, followed by juicy flavors of ripe plum, black cherry and buttered toast with a hint of caramel rounding out the finish. Elegant, velvety tannins and lush fruit make this wine an ideal match for beef sliders, Tandoori chicken or even chocolate mousse.

**APPELLATION:** CALIFORNIA  /  **ALCOHOL:** 13.5% BY VOLUME  /  **TOTAL ACID:** 0.57 G/100ML  /  **FINAL PH:** 3.49

**Vintage**
If California winemakers were asked to describe the 2015 vintage in a few words, they would be “early, light and excellent.” A mild winter forced an early bud break, followed by a prolonged bloom and unusually cool spring temperatures that produced smaller berries, fewer clusters and therefore, reduced yields compared to the last three record-breaking vintages. After a hot, dry summer, a temperature spike in late August accelerated ripening and harvest to be a couple weeks earlier than usual. All of these elements resulted in high quality grapes statewide — balanced acidity levels, intense aromatics and concentrated colors and flavors.

**Vineyards**
A portion of the grapes for the 2015 Gnarly Head Merlot were harvested from specially selected vineyards within the Borden Ranch AVA, which is nestled in the eastern Sierra Nevada foothills of the Lodi, California growing region, known for producing Bordeaux varietals with rich, ripe flavors. The combination of clay soils, ideal daytime warmth and cool evening breezes lead to evenly ripened Merlot grapes full of concentration, black stone fruit flavors and nuances of heady spice characters.

**Winemaking**
Grapes were harvested in the cool evening hours, delivered immediately to the winery, destemmed into tank and slowly warmed to fermentation temperature. After primary fermentation, the wine was gently pressed and then racked onto American and French oak for malolactic fermentation, as well as aging to integrate fruit flavors and add complexity.

When the search for great Zinfandel led us to Lodi, we saw vineyards that are among the oldest in California. The vines planted in these older vineyards are free-standing “head trained” vines that resemble wild bushes with twisted old trunks and branches that spread out in all directions like unruly umbrellas — truly gnarly heads. These gnarled, head trained vines provided the inspiration for Gnarly Head. The wines they create are powerful, concentrated, and in other words, gnarly. But Zinfandel is not the only California grape that can be gnarly. All Gnarly Head wines are crafted in our house style — bold and juicy.