



2000 Merlot

Columbia Valley, Washington

THE WINE

Merlot's rich fruit character and soft, silky tannins have made it one of the most popular red wines in the U.S. Eastern Washington's long days and cool nights make it the perfect place to grow Merlot. The Genesis by Hogue Merlot has aromas of black olive, cassis and berry, with a rustic earthiness. The wine's richness carries the black cherry, plum and clove spice flavors on the palate, and it's all complemented by sweet oak in the finish.

THE VINTAGE AND VINEYARDS

The 2000 vintage proceeded evenly and gave us few surprises. A mild spring with a couple of frost incidents transitioned nicely into a normal summer. September was cooler than average, with a bit of rain. The lack of wild temperature swings allowed the grapes to mature evenly until the cool weather arrived to slow everything down. What we'd thought would be a quick harvest stretched out a bit longer than normal, and the moderate crop loads allowed everything to ripen with optimal phenolic maturity, very good color and tannin development. The majority of the fruit for the Genesis Merlot (63%) came from the Wahluke Slope, with 20% of the grapes from the Yakima Valley. Other regions included the Tri-Cities and Alderdale growing areas. The Wahluke Slope and the Tri-Cities contribute ripe, full body and developed tannins, while the cooler sites in the Yakima Valley give the wine bright fruit flavors and texture. We started picking on September 18th at the Fries Vineyard on the Wahluke Slope, and finished with a bit of Lemberger that went into the blend on October 26th.

THE WINEMAKING

The Genesis Merlot vineyard lots all ferment and age individually so we can determine which of their unique characteristics we want to emphasize in the final blend. We use a combination of yeasts for primary fermentation, including D254 and Pasteur Red. The lots aged in a combination of 66% American oak, 32% French oak and stainless steel for 12 months, followed by six months of bottle aging prior to release.

THE NUMBERS

Varietal Percentage: 81.5% Merlot, 11% Lemberger, 6.5% Syrah, 1% Cabernet Sauvignon

Brix at Harvest: 25.5°

Total Acidity: 0.58 g/100 ml

pH: 3.46

Alcohol: 14.5%

Release Date: February 2003



GENESIS

by Hogue