



# 2001 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 2001 vintage temperatures were below average during spring and early summer. June was very cool, with an average temperature of 80.1°F. At that point the thermometers really spiked (August average was 89.5°F). The average temperature during the season was 83.3°F from June through September. The summer drought provided an extra challenge for water management. Ultimately, it turned out to be a challenging and rewarding vintage in both the vineyard and winery. Moderate crop loads ensured very good color and tannin development. Much of the fruit for the Genesis Merlot (42%) came from the Wahluke Slope, with 21% of the grapes from the Yakima Valley and 21% coming from Alderdale. Other regions included the Tri-Cities and Walla Walla growing areas. The Wahluke Slope, Alderdale 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 12 at the Fries Vineyard on the Wahluke Slope and at the Zephyr Vineyard in Alderdale. The last to come in was the Cabernet Sauvignon from Zephyr Ridge Vineyard on October 8. The average picking date was October 2.

## 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 Pasteur Red and D254. The lots aged in a combination of 73% American oak, 24% French oak and stainless steel for 12 months, followed by six months of bottle aging prior to release.

## THE NUMBERS

Varietal Percentage: 79% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon, 8% Syrah, 1% Lemberger

Brix at Harvest: 25.6°

Total Acidity: 0.58 g/100 ml

pH: 3.63

Alcohol: 13.8%

Release Date: February 2004



# GENESIS

by Hogue