

2002 Cabernet-Merlot

Columbia Valley

THE WINE

Blending Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot has been a tradition for centuries. But in most cases, only a modest amount of Cabernet or Merlot is added to the other for a bit of added complexity or softness. We think blending almost equal amounts of each varietal makes the resulting wine a perfect complement to both varietals: the body and character of a Cabernet Sauvignon with the soft richness and fruit of a Merlot. Our 2002 Cabernet-Merlot has a purple/red color, with aromas of blackberry, tobacco and licorice. A chocolatey top note lingers behind the fruit. Flavors are of berry and spice, complemented by a medium-rich mouthfeel and a toasty vanilla finish.

THE VINTAGE AND VINEYARDS

A normal year in terms of heat accumulation 2002 was characterized by unseasonably hot weather in July followed by a normal August and an exceptionally dry and temperate fall. The dry, breezy fall weather led to optimal ripening, with plenty of hang time for the development of flavors. Picking began on Alder Ridge on September 15 and ended with the last Cabernet from Upper Yakima Valley on October 19. The majority of the fruit came from Alderdale and Yakima Valley vineyards.

THE WINEMAKING

The Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot lots fermented separately in stainless steel tanks with a peak temperature of 88°F and the fermentation lasted an average of 7 days. We pressed the lots at an average Brix of 4.7°, higher than in previous years because extraction was so generous. The lots were inoculated for malolactic fermentation during the primary yeast fermentation. The wine was aged for 10 months, allowing the wine to develop and mature while retaining the vibrant Washington fruit aromas and flavors.

THE NUMBERS

Appellation: Columbia Valley, Washington

Varietal Percentages: 51% Cabernet Sauvignon, 47% Merlot, 2% Cabernet Franc

Brix at Harvest: 25.7°

Total Acidity: 0.57 g/100 ml

pH: 3.71

Alcohol: 13.7% by volume

Release Date: June 2004

