

2001 Merlot

Columbia Valley, Washington

THE WINE

The Hogue 2001 Reserve Merlot is made from grapes grown in the warmer Wahluke and Alderdale growing regions. This Reserve Merlot epitomizes Washington State Merlot: earth, spice, leather and black olive aromas complemented by soft oak and ripe berry. Flavors are of dark chocolate and cream, intense raspberry fruit and herbal mint spice. It has great structure and mature tannins, with the fruit concentration necessary to age elegantly.

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°F. In August, the thermometer really spiked with an average temperature of 90°F. A summer drought provided an extra challenge for the grape farmers managing scarce water. Ultimately, it turned out to be a rewarding vintage in both the vineyard and winery. Moderate crop loads ensured very good color and tannin development. This wine is 76% Merlot, 14% Syrah, 5% Lemberger and 5% Cabernet Sauvignon. We combined ripe, concentrated Merlot from the Fries Vineyard on the Wahluke Slope with Zephyr Ridge Merlot both bringing fruit concentration and tannin structure to the wine. Syrah from the Andrews Vineyard in the Alderdale region rounds out the wine and fills in the mouthfeel. The Lemberger lifts the fruit and Cabernet Sauvignon adds complexity. These sites have been designated "Reserve" vineyards for their consistent production of excellent fruit, and for the growers' commitment to quality.

WINEMAKING NOTES

After crushing, the juice fermented on the skins for 6 days. We used a combination of Pasteur Red and D254 yeast. Malolactic fermentation took place in French oak barrels while the wine aged for 27 months. The wine was then racked out of barrels and bottled (unfined and unfiltered), and given an additional 6 months of bottle aging before release.

WINE DATA

Appellation: Columbia Valley

Varietal Percentage: 76% Merlot, 14% Syrah, 5% Lemberger, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon

Harvest Brix: 25.8°

TA: 0.55/100 ml

pH: 3.61

Alcohol: 14.4%

Release Date: June 2004

HOGUE
RESERVE