

2002 Reserve Merlot

Columbia Valley, Washington

THE WINE

The Hogue 2002 Reserve Merlot is made from grapes grown in the warm Wahluke Slope and Alderdale areas. This Reserve Merlot epitomizes Washington Merlot: Warm mocha notes, sage, and spice highlight this generous yet balanced wine built around a core of intense blackberry and plum. Its richness ensures the wine is drinkable now, and the wine will fare well with cellaring.

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. This wine is a blend of 76% Merlot, 18% Cabernet Sauvignon and 5% Syrah. We combined ripe, concentrated Merlot from the Fries Vineyard on the Wahluke Slope with Andrews Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon from Alderdale and a small amount of Syrah from Roskamp Vineyard in Yakima Valley. These sites have been designated "Reserve" vineyards for their consistent production of excellent fruit, and for the growers' commitment to quality.

THE WINEMAKING

After crushing, the juice fermented on the skins for 6 days. We used a combination of D254 and D80 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.

THE NUMBERS

Appellation: Columbia Valley

Varietal Percentage: 76% Merlot, 19% Cabernet Sauvignon 5% Syrah.

Harvest Brix: 26.9°

TA: 0.60/100 ml

pH: 3.60

Alcohol: 14.1%

Release Date: February 2005

HOGUE
RESERVE