

2001 Syrah

Columbia Valley, Washington

THE WINE

This is the inaugural vintage of Hogue Syrah. Syrah's popularity continues to grow nationwide because of its flavor concentration and soft, forward fruit. In Washington, we have identified areas within the Columbia Valley where the varietal does extremely well. The grapes are picked when the flavors are concentrated and very ripe. We've blended in Lemberger and Merlot to add complexity and structure to the finished wine. Lemberger's black pepper and spice has a lot in common with Syrah and integrates well with the spice imparted by aging in American oak. Aromas are of cherry, violet, wild game and white chocolate. The flavors mirror the aromas and are backed up by a rich mouthfeel, soft tannins and a long finish.

THE VINTAGE AND VINEYARDS

The 2001 vintage gave us average temperatures through June, then it warmed up through mid August. At that point temperatures spiked and the season ended up being a warm one overall, with averages around 83° F from June through September. The summer drought provided an extra challenge for water management. 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. The majority of the fruit for this new Syrah came from the Yakima Valley (80%), with an additional 8% from Wahluke Slope, about 6% from Tri-Cities, and 4% from Alderdale. We began harvesting the Syrah from the Roskamp Vineyard in the lower Yakima Valley on September 12 and finished in the Heintz Vineyard, also in the Yakima Valley, on October 20.

THE WINEMAKING

The wine was pressed off from the skins when the proper color and tannin extraction were achieved. This is often before the wine has reached dryness. The wine underwent malolactic fermentation. The wine aged for 15 months mainly in American oak before being racked, blended and bottled in April 2003.

THE NUMBERS

Appellation: Columbia Valley, Washington

Varietal Percentages: 75.03% Syrah, 15.21% Lemberger, 7.99% Merlot, 1.44% Cabernet Sauvignon, 0.33% Cabernet Franc.

Brix at Harvest: 24.9°

Total Acidity: 0.66 g/100 ml

pH: 3.63

Finished Alcohol: 13.5% by volume

