

2003 Hogue Syrah

Columbia Valley, Washington

THE WINE

This is the third 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 Merlot to add structure and richness with a touch of Sangiovese for spice. This is a very complex Syrah. It presents raspberry, caramel, and smoked meat aromas with a hint of menthol and oregano. In the mouth it comes across as supple and rich without being aggressive. It tastes of ripe cherry, pipe tobacco, game meats, and sage and would go well with spicy pan-Asian poultry and rice or noodle dishes.

THE VINTAGE AND VINEYARDS

The grapes were sourced from the entire Columbia Valley growing region. The growing season of 2003 was the warmest of the last decade. Warmer regions such as the Horse Heaven Hills (65%) and Wahluke Slope (13%) produced very ripe and tannic fruit while the cooler Yakima Valley (17%) brought balance to sugar, acidity, and fruit character. The 2003 growing season began with a fairly cool spring followed by a long, warm summer (total heat unit accumulation was 15% higher than the average). It was also a dry year, with only 2 inches of rain compared to the 70-year average of 3 inches. Perfect harvest conditions in September resulted in a vintage of great quality.

THE WINEMAKING

The fruit was harvested between September 5th and October 22nd at an average 25.2° Brix. The base wines fermented primarily with Pasteur Red yeast for an average of six days at a peak temperature of 86°F. After pressing all the wine lots were inoculated for malolactic fermentation and allowed to reach dryness with frequent racking. Once dry the wines were aged exposed to oak for up to ten months with the goal of preserving fruit and mellowing the wine. This wine was bottled in mid-July of 2004.

THE NUMBERS

Appellation: Columbia Valley

Varietal Percentage: 87% Syrah, 10% Merlot, 2% Sangiovese

Harvest Brix: 25.2°

TA: 0.62/100 ml

pH: 3.73

Alcohol: 13.9%

Release Date: September 2005

