

• BOOKWALTER WINERY •

894 TULIP LANE RICHLAND WASHINGTON 99352 • 1-877-667-8300

LUSH RED AND VIBRANT WHITE WINES FROM THE COLUMBIA VALLEY

2003 • MERLOT • COLUMBIA VALLEY WASHINGTON

VINTAGE

The 2003 vintage was one of the warmest vintages in the last 10 years in Washington with hot weather lasting throughout the entire month of September and early October. The last two weeks of October finally brought arctic weather with evening temperatures dropping into the high teens. Fortunately, due to the long, warm growing season, the grapes from this vintage had reached physiologically ripeness and maturity by the time the cold weather arrived. The wines from this vintage are ripe leaning towards the dark fruit profile, contain reasonable acidity and show firm tannins that should allow for mid to long term cellaring.

VINEYARDS

The vineyard sources for this wine are located on Red Mountain and in the Columbia Valley appellations. 67% Conner-Lee, 26% Ciel du Cheval and 7% Andrews Horse Heaven Vineyard.

WINEMAKING

All the grapes were hand harvested at optimal maturity and hand sorted over a conveyor belt before crushing and destemming. After gentle crushing to maintain a high percentage of whole berries, the different wine lots were cold soaked in open and closed top fermentors for 24 to 48 hours. Once inoculated with Bordeaux Red yeast, the wine was allowed to ferment at temperatures between 80 and 90 degrees Fahrenheit. Two to three daily punchdowns coupled with aerative pumpovers precipitated gentle extraction. After approximately 5 to 7 days of fermentation, the wines were gently basket pressed between 5 and 12 Brix. All the free run and press wines were separated and aged independently from one another. Primary and malolactic fermentations were completed in new and used French oak barrels. During the aging process, the wines were gently racked from barrel to barrel every three months and egg white fined before bottling to help soften the tannins and improve the clarity of the wines.

FINAL BLEND

79% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon, 7% Malbec and 7% Petit Verdot.

AGING

Aged for 15 months in new and one year old French oak barrels. All of the barrels were thin stave, medium toast with toasted heads from select forests and coopers.

CASES PRODUCED

644 cases

TECHNICAL DATA

Bottled January, 2005, pH 3.75, TA .59, alcohol 14.5% by volume.

TASTING NOTES

Like all of our wines, our 2003 Merlot is aged exclusively in hand selected, small French oak barrels that are meticulously chosen for their richness and suitability for a particular variety of wine. The 2003 Merlot blend was aged for 15 months in Francois Freres and Treuil barrels that beautifully framed in the Merlot fruit from this outstanding vintage. The final blend displays copious quantities of mocha, coffee bean, sweet spices and cassis on the nose followed by concentrated flavors of blackberry, cherry, plum and cocoa on the palate. The wine is viscous and the tannins are sweet, firm and linger on the palate for nearly one full minute.



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