

# 2011 PROTAGONIST COLUMBIA VALLEY



## TASTING NOTES

The sixth release of this highly sought after blend is once again more about finesse than brute force as in previous vintages. A blend of cool and warm site vineyards, the wine is ripe, structured and balanced. Aromas of bright fruits like raspberries, cherries, plums and red currants are surrounded with secondary and tertiary scents of truffles, resin, cocoa, rose petals, graphite and a signature Eastern Washington dustiness. The wine enters the palate sweet and has a medium body that displays the bright red fruits of the cooler vintage wrapped in cola, resin, truffle oil, baking spices, white chocolate and savory herbs. The wine finishes with fine grained yet firm tannins and the signature acidity of the vintage. The bright red fruits coupled with the firm tannins and acidity will allow for greater aging potential with proper cellaring.

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**VINTAGE** The 2011 vintage was the coldest vintage on record in Eastern Washington based upon accumulated heat units. The cool, damp spring delayed bud break by three weeks, which led to a summer that although very pleasant, was atypical in that we did not experience dramatic heat spikes and or stretches of extreme heat. The cooler summer contributed to veraison setting almost three weeks late and well into September on some varieties. Thankfully, September was warm and dry, and Eastern Washington experienced a more typical Indian summer. October was a mixed bag of warm sunny days and damp weather, but without any damaging frosts, harvest was extended well into November. The red wines from this vintage show more red fruit, higher acidity and lower alcohol, which are all hallmarks of this uncharacteristically cool vintage.

**WINEMAKING** All the grapes were hand harvested at optimal maturity, hand sorted over a conveyor belt before de-stemming, then post sorted over a shaker table to remove all debris other than grapes. The grapes were only de-stemmed and gently moved to our fermentors with a high percentage of whole berries. All the wine lots were cold soaked in open and closed top fermentors for 4-5 days prior to fermentation. Once inoculated with three types of yeast, the wine was allowed to ferment at a peak temperature of 80°F. Daily punch downs coupled with aerative pumpovers precipitated gentle extraction. After approximately 5-7 days of fermentation, the wines were gently pressed between 2 and 5 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 barrel aging process, the wine lees were stirred weekly for the first three months in addition to topping the barrels once to twice per week throughout the entire aging cycle of the wine.

## APPELLATIONS • VINEYARDS

Columbia Valley 76%	Dionysus 52%
	Conner-Lee 20%
	Sagemoor 4%
Red Mountain 20%	Ciel du Cheval 20%
Yakima Valley 4%	Elephant Mountain 4%

## FINAL BLEND

52% Cabernet Sauvignon, 40% Merlot, 8% Syrah.

## AGING

The wines were aged on the lees, topped weekly and were neither racked nor fined. Aged for 20 months in new and one and two year old French oak barrels. The barrel selection was composed of small (225 liter) and large format (340 liter) barrels that were mostly three year air dried, medium toast with thick staves (27mm).

## CASES PRODUCED

978 six-pack cases/750mL  
99 cases/375mL  
50 cases/1.5L

## TECHNICAL DATA

Bottled Summer 2013,  
pH 3.70, TA .58,  
Alcohol 15.48% by volume

