



**COLUMBIA VALLEY RESERVE
2005 Merlot**

BACKGROUND

Merlot is the red wine that Washington State is perhaps best known for. Merlot seems very well suited to Washington growing conditions. It is the earliest ripening red grape here and is fully ripe as early as mid-September. The weather is usually still quite warm then, and this guarantees full ripeness every year. The dry growing conditions ensure a good set of fruit most years.

HARVEST

2005 was a spectacular year for Washington red wines. Summer was long and hot followed by a warm, dry Indian summer. Grape yields were light which resulted in wines with highly concentrated flavors. We chose select vineyards, each bringing their own unique characteristics to create complexity and depth. The overall soil character of these vineyards is very shallow sandy loam that drains quickly, producing excellent concentrated fruit.

WINEMAKING

For the Columbia Valley Reserve Merlot, the fruit is handled very delicately during the picking and winemaking processes to preserve as many whole berries as possible. After pressing, the wine underwent fermentation in stainless steel tank, where the juice was pumped twice a day to maintain constant contact with the skins for maximum color and flavor extraction. After fermentation, the wine is transferred to a blend of 70% French and 30% American oak barrels for about 12 months.

WINEMAKER'S DESCRIPTION

Our Columbia Valley Reserve Merlot is ruby red in color, with a complex nose of green dried herbs, bramble bush, and wet stone. The luscious, supple mouth feel is shaped by rich tannins and toasty vanilla undertones. This elegant, food friendly wine can be enjoyed now or cellared for up to seven years.

FOOD PAIRING SUGGESTIONS

Enjoy this classic Columbia Valley Reserve Merlot with grilled steak, pork chops, roast duck or other robust fare, especially rich dishes with smoky and meaty flavors.

TECHNICAL DATA

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| Winemaker: | Kerry Norton | Alcohol: | 13.5% |
| Appellation: | Columbia Valley | Total Acidity: | 0.72 g/100ml |
| Varietals | 97% Merlot, 3% Malbec | pH: | 3.55 |
| Harvested: | September 2005 | Cases Produced: | 5,175 |
| Bottled: | September 2007 | | |
| Released: | January 2008 | | |