

WALLA WALLA
SPRING VALLEY VINEYARD
WASHINGTON

2010 Mule Skinner Merlot

WALLA WALLA VALLEY

NAME ORIGIN

The names given to Spring Valley Vineyard wines are a tribute to the family members who have struggled and succeeded in farming the same land where the vineyard and winery now flourish. This 100% Merlot is named for Frederick Corkrum's job as the ranch's head Muleskinner, the person who cared for and drove the mules in all aspects of the farming operation before the advent of the Caterpillar tractor.

A FAMILY TRADITION

Following the tradition of Uriah, Katherine, Frederick, and Nina Lee Corkrum, Shari Corkrum Derby and her husband Dean Derby continue to farm the wheat fields, vineyard, and winery. The hard work, traditional values, and deep family ties that have kept the ranch going for over 100 years are mirrored in Spring Valley Vineyard's signature offerings.

THE VINEYARD

Spring Valley Vineyard is situated 12 miles northeast of Walla Walla, amid the picturesque wheat fields of southeastern Washington with the Blue Mountains presenting the backdrop. The initial block of Merlot was planted in 1993 on a south-southwest facing hillside. The vines follow the north-south slope of the hills in vertical rows, an orientation that, combined with the declination of the slope, allows the vines to take optimal advantage of air drainage, sunshine, and the reflective nature of the surrounding wheat fields.

Great care is taken when caring for the vineyard. Every vine is tended by hand, including crop thinning, leaf pulling, and harvesting, as well as hand-burying individual canes to protect them during the winter in southeastern Washington.

VINTAGE

A cooler vintage marked by a mild spring and cool summer, followed by warmer weather in the later summer and into harvest which allowed grapes to ripen to maturity. Harvest was concentrated during the month of October, and this later timeframe allowed the fruit extra hang time to achieve perfect ripeness and sugar levels. The finished wines from 2010 are very *terroir*-oriented and showcase the finesse and elegance of Spring Valley fruit.

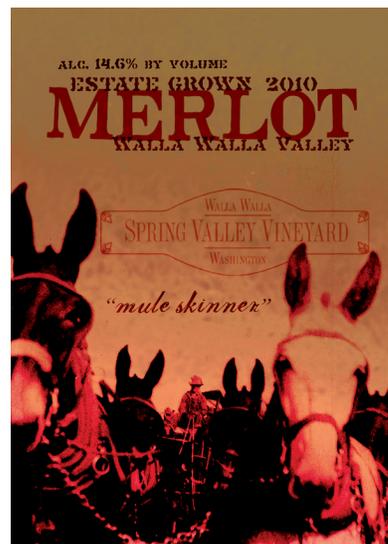
WINEMAKING

Spring Valley Vineyard fruit is hand-picked, hand-sorted, and gently de-stemmed by gravity. During the 10-20 day fermentation, each tank is tasted daily until Serge decides it is time to press using wooden cage basket presses. In keeping with Spring Valley tradition, originally instituted by founding winemaker Devin Corkrum Derby, hand punchdowns occur twice a day until the end of alcoholic fermentation. The wine is transferred by pump into barrel for secondary fermentation, and then gets racked several times for clarity. Finally, the different lots are blended to create our six distinctive labels.

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES

This 100% Estate-grown Merlot has a very seductive *terroir*-driven nose of fresh thyme and wheat. On the palate, the wine is vibrant and rich with plenty of red summer berries (cherry, raspberry, strawberry and cassis) and a hint of ripe peach. The finish is velvety and juicy with nice acidity.

~ Winemaker Serge Laville



TECHNICAL DATA:

Blend:

100% Merlot

TA: 0.68 g / 100 ml

pH: 3.58

Alcohol: 14.6%

Aging:

18 months in
100% French oak,
40% new

Appellation:

Walla Walla Valley

Vineyard:

100% Spring Valley Vineyard
Estate Bottled