

COLUMBIA CREST

GRAND ESTATES



TASTING NOTES

"Layers of complexity and a rich aromatic profile of vanilla bean and mocha introduce this Merlot. The palate delivers exceptional fruit flavors, dark chocolate covered cherries, caramel and nutmeg flavors that create a lush and velvety smooth finish."

JUAN MUÑOZ OCA, WINEMAKER

VINEYARDS Columbia Valley

FIRST HARVEST DATE October 2, 2010

BLEND 95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet

FERMENTATION 6-10 days

BARREL REGIME 1/3 new oak for 14 months

ALCOHOL 13.9%

TOTAL ACIDITY 0.58 g/100ml

PH 3.71

2010 MERLOT

GROWING SEASON

- The 2010 vintage was the cooler than the past vintages; bud break arrived on schedule in early April, but a cool, wet spring delayed flowering and reduced fruit set across many varieties.
- An unusually cool summer produced dramatic differences in ripening between warmer and cooler sites, with veraison extending into September in some cooler areas.
- However, naturally low yields, combined with over a month of consistently warm weather from late September through late October, produced phenolic ripeness and flavor development with extraordinary natural acidity.
- Cool, wet weather returned in late October, an appropriate bookend to a challenging harvest.
- Overall, 2010 produced balanced, elegant wines with lower alcohol and higher acidity.

VINEYARDS

- Columbia Valley vineyards are seated east of the Cascade Mountain range. Up to 14,000 feet high, the mountains effectively block eastward-moving wet weather systems from the Pacific Ocean.
- Other vineyards sites include the Horse Heaven Hills (which contributes texture and body) and the Wahluke Slope (for aromatics and complexity).
- Just 6 to 8 inches of rainfall reach the growing region annually. Vineyards are 100% drip irrigated.
- The soils have low fertility and low water-holding capacity, allowing precise control of vine growth patterns.
- Vines are planted north to south on south and southeast-facing slopes.

VINIFICATION

- Grapes were crushed with 30% whole berries remaining.
- Fermentation lasted 6 - 10 days on skins to extract optimum fruit and textural components.
- Blending occurred immediately after fermentation.
- Malolactic fermentation occurred in a combination of stainless steel tanks and oak barrels.
- The wine barrel-aged in 1/3 new oak for 14 months.

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