

## 2014 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 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 operate 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 lies 12 miles northeast of Walla Walla, amid the picturesque wheat fields of southeastern Washington and the Blue Mountains in the distance. The initial block of Merlot was planted in 1993 on a southern hillside facing southwest. The vines follow the north-south slope of the hills in vertical rows, an orientation that when 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 grape 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

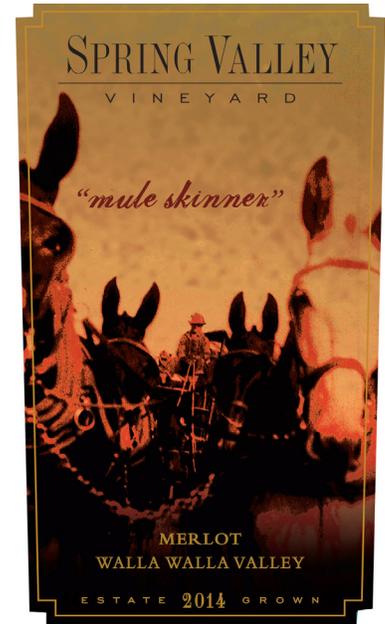
It was definitely a warm vintage for Spring Valley Vineyards. The conditions during harvest were excellent with warm days and relatively cool nights. Picking started during the 2nd week of September, eliminating the need for a late harvest. Despite the warmer temperatures of 2014, we have not encountered any big tannins. The wines are rich but soft and elegant and naturally terroir driven.

### 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 Spring Valley Vineyard Winemaker Serge Laville 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 punch-downs occur twice a day until the end of alcoholic fermentation. The wine is transferred by pump into barrels for secondary fermentation and gets racked several times for clarity. Finally, the different lots are blended to create our six distinctive labels.

### WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES

"A great vintage for Merlot. Ripe but still retaining a nice acidity and terroir. Some herbal characteristics with bright fruit and most importantly, the balance is reached thanks to an early pick." ~ Winemaker Serge Laville



### TECHNICAL DATA

#### BLEND:

100% Merlot

TA: 0.51 g / 100 ml

pH: 3.82

Alcohol: 14.2%

#### AGING:

19 months in 100% French oak, 40% new

#### APPELLATION:

Walla Walla Valley

#### VINEYARD:

100% Spring Valley Vineyard  
Estate Bottled