



2006 Muleskinner 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 wheat and barley farming operation before the advent of the Caterpillar tractor.

A FAMILY TRADITION

Following the tradition of Uriah, Frederick, and Nina Lee Corkrum, Shari Corkrum Derby and her husband Dean Derby continue to operate the wheat, vineyard, and winery. Dean's brother, Gaynor Derby, manages the vineyard. 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 and spread amid the picturesque wheat fields of southeastern Washington. The unique microclimate of Spring Valley allows the grapes to develop their own distinct characteristics. Vines follow the north-south slope of the hills in vertical rows. This orientation, coupled with the declination of slope, allows the vines to receive optimal sunshine, drainage, and the reflective effects of the surrounding hills.

Under Gaynor Derby's direction, every grape is tended by hand, including crop thinning, leaf pulling, and harvesting. The Derbys are committed to sustainable farming practices, as have all the generations preceding them, and use techniques such as "rip and ridge" tilling for maximum composting and water retention.

VINTAGE

The 2006 growing season began with a mild spring, followed by a hot, dry summer which contributed to excellent acid levels, balanced canopies, and small berries with concentrated flavors. Mild temperatures in August helped to extend the ripening period into September and October, leading to fantastic fruit quality across varietals at Spring Valley Vineyard.

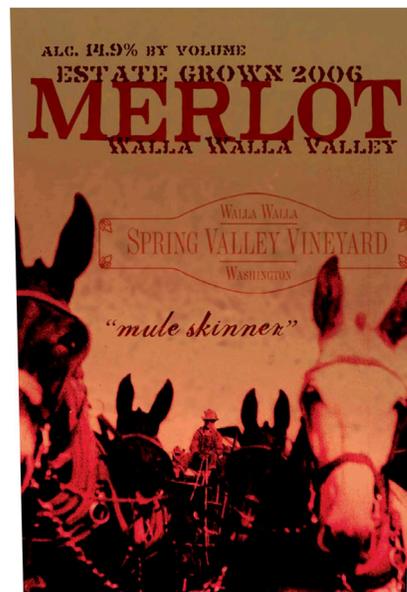
WINEMAKING

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 pressing decision using wooden cage basket presses. In keeping with Spring Valley tradition, hand punchdowns occur three times a day until the end of alcoholic fermentation. The wine is transferred by pump into barrel for secondary fermentation, and then gets racked and blended together several times for clarity. Finally, the different lots are blended to create our five distinctive labels.

WINEMAKER TASTING NOTES

Aromas of red ripe fruit, dry wheat, and forest top soil give way to a burst of strawberry and cassis on the palate in this 100% Merlot. Soft tannins and well-integrated oak give the wine a huge background and a long, sweet finish.

–Serge Laville, Winemaker



TECHNICAL DATA:

Blend:

100% Merlot

TA: 0.62g/100ml

pH: 3.72

Alcohol: 14.9%

Aging:

18 months in 100% French oak

Appellation:

Walla Walla Valley

Vineyard:

100% Spring Valley Vineyard

Estate Bottled