

WALLA WALLA  
**SPRING VALLEY VINEYARD**  
WASHINGTON

## 2008 Mule Skinner Merlot

WALLA WALLA VALLEY

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### 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 Mule Skinner, 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 is situated 12 miles northeast of Walla Walla, amid the picturesque wheat fields of southeastern Washington with the Blue Mountains providing 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 grape is tended by hand, including crop thinning, leaf pulling, and harvesting, as well as hand-burying individual canes to protect them from the cold winters of southeastern Washington.

### VINTAGE

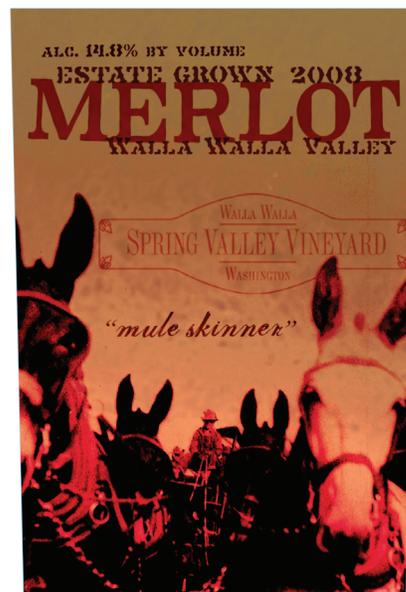
A cool spring and summer was followed by a hot spell in late August and a warm September, which allowed for a nice, slow ripening period and a mid-September start to harvest. The first two weeks of October continued with warm days and cool nights. Harvest at Spring Valley was finished the third week of October. 2008 was a light crop year and the wines from this vintage are very refined. These wines will gain flesh and complexity with aging but can be enjoyed in the near future as well.

### 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 offers aromas of spicy pepper blended with fresh raspberry, wet dirt, and foresty scents, leading into flavors of bright cassis and cherry which linger on a soft finish. This is a wine to enjoy now, with a delicious dinner and friends. ~ Winemaker Serge Laville



### TECHNICAL DATA:

**Blend:**

100% Merlot

TA: 0.58 g / 100 ml

pH: 3.77

Alcohol: 14.8%

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**Aging:**

18 months in

100% French oak,

40% new

**Appellation:**

Walla Walla Valley

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**Vineyard:**

100% Spring Valley Vineyard

Estate Bottled