

COLUMBIA·CREST®

GRAND ESTATES

Merlot

2008

Growing Season

- A perfect ripening season with full crop yields and restrained sugar levels led to outstanding wines from Washington state's vineyards in 2008.
- Harvest began 10 days later than normal due to cool spring weather and a moderate summer.
- Hot weather in August provided ideal ripening conditions for grapes across all varieties and harvest was quickly ramped up in order to obtain fruit at the optimum ripeness.

Vineyards

- Grand Estates Merlot is harvested from vineyards located predominantly on the Horse Heaven Hills (which contributes texture and body) and the Wahluke Slope (for aromatics and complexity.)
- 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.
- 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 7 - 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.

Tasting Notes

"Aromas of vanilla bean, coffee bean, and mocha introduce this classic Merlot. Dark chocolate covered cherries, caramel and nutmeg flavors meld with silky tannins and create a long and elegant finish."



Juan Muñoz Oca, Winemaker

Appellation

Columbia Valley

Harvest Date

10/08/08

Blend

90% Merlot,
5% Cabernet Sauvignon,
5% Cabernet Franc

Fermentation

7-10 days on skins.

Yeasts

Premier Cuvee, CSM,
Pasteur Red, D21, D254.

Alcohol

13.5%

Total Acidity

0.54 g/100ml

pH

3.75

