

COLUMBIA·CREST®

GRAND ESTATES

Merlot

2009

Growing Season

- The growing season was perfect with dry, warm weather and lots of sunshine.
- Although bloom was delayed slightly by cool spring weather, warm temperatures soon returned and perfect ripening weather lasted through September.
- A freeze in the Columbia Valley on the night of October 10th led to a slightly early end to the harvest season. However most grapes were already picked or had already reached a good level of maturity.
- Overall the 2009 vintage produced wines with lots of natural acidity and fruit-forward flavors.

Growing Season

- 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 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.

Tasting Notes

"A rich and aromatic profile of vanilla bean and mocha introduce this Merlot. Dark chocolate covered cherries, caramel and nutmeg flavors create a lush and velvety smooth texture and finish."

Juan Muñoz Oca, Winemaker

Appellation

Columbia Valley

First Harvest Date

October 3, 2009

Fermentation

6-10 days on skins

Varietals

Merlot 85%
Syrah 11%
Cabernet Sauvignon 4%

Alcohol

13.6%

Total Acidity

0.51 g/100ml

pH

3.77

Food Pairings

Food Pairings: Mild to intensely flavored food such as grilled salmon, roasted lamb, and balsamic or tomato-based sauces work well with the jammy flavors of Merlot. The softer flavor profile makes it a great match for Chinese food.

