

Latah Creek

2006 Washington State MERLOT



EARLY START — THEN THE WAIT

Smiles of relief can be found on all our faces — harvest is over. A cool, wet spring and late bud-break fooled us into believing that we were going to have a later-than-normal harvest, so we spent much of August playing and enjoying our new granddaughter. But then all of a sudden havoc throughout the state. The very warm summer caused early ripening varieties to progress so rapidly that some needed picking before September came; the earliest I'd ever seen in Washington State. A cool spell in mid-September though, slowed things to a halt. We didn't see a single grape come into the winery for nearly two weeks during the middle of the month. The problem was not the sugar level in the grapes (one of the picking criteria we measure), it was the extremely high acid levels resulting from the cool temperatures. Fortunately the weather held, allowing for the extra hang time needed to get those later ripening grapes into balance. Although a late-October freeze spoiled attempts for some to get absolutely "perfect" numbers, we felt lucky that we were already done. Summing up this vintage: "Mother Nature smiled on Washington State once again this year and provided a near ideal climate for grapes. She provided us with a fast start, a slow middle and a long finish to produce a vintage to remember. The grapes got as ripe as wanted and the color was intense and dark for the reds. The wines are going to be really good."



TASTING NOTES

This Merlot is marvelous. The wine's deepish red and indigo colors promise great things to come and its full-bodied, intensely varietal blackberry aromas and jammy flavors deliver. This is not a giant, get-in-your face Merlot, but one full of wonderful Merlot fruit and character. This wine has everything you'd expect from a Washington State Merlot. French oak aging adds vanillin complexity making it enjoyable now, or watch it soften gracefully with a few additional years of cellar aging. To preserve the intense fruit characteristics of the grape, no cellar fining was done — only minimal filtration prior to bottling. Some sediment is to be expected.



AWARDS — ACCOLADES

'83 Vintage — The Washington Wine Writers pick as the best Washington Merlot from the Vintage 1982 through 1985. "This wine shows the age-ability of Merlot and its potential in the hands of a skilled winemaker."

'86 Vintage — 89 points *The Wine Spectator*

'87 Vintage — 90 points *The Wine Spectator* among *The Wine Spectator's* 1989 TOP 100

'89 Vintage — 91 points *The Wine Spectator* among *The Wine Spectator's* 1991 TOP 100

'91 Vintage — 87 points *The Wine Spectator*

'93 Vintage — 88 points *NW Wine Palate*

'98 Vintage — 89 points *The Wine Spectator*



WINE

MAKING

NOTES

Harvest date: September 12, 2006

Vineyard: 100% Wahluke Slope
Mattawa, Washington

Brix: 25.5

T.A.: .65

pH: 3.47

Yeast: Prie de Mouse and French Red

Malolactic fermentation: 100% complete

Fining: none

Creating

fine wines

from

Washington

State

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