

# COLUMBIA CREST

GRAND ESTATES



## TASTING NOTES

"The Grand Estates Merlot opens with rich aromas of dark cherries and chocolate. Complex flavors of fruit, mocha and caramel are complemented by a smooth, velvety finish."

JUAN MUÑOZ OCA, WINEMAKER

**VINEYARDS** Columbia Valley

**FIRST HARVEST DATE** October 10, 2011

**BLEND** 96% Merlot, 4% Cabernet Sauvignon

**ALCOHOL** 13.5%

**TOTAL ACIDITY** 0.57 g/100ml

**PH** 3.65

## FOOD PAIRINGS

Blue cheese, duck, beef, veal, dark chocolate

## 2011 MERLOT

### GROWING SEASON

- A combination of weather conditions led to one of the more challenging vintages in Washington state's history.
- A freeze in Nov. 2010 affected vineyards throughout the Columbia Valley, though many sites were not harmed. Additionally, the diversity of Columbia Crest's vineyard sources balanced vintage variances.
- Cool temperatures prevailed during the springtime, which delayed bud break and bloom by three to four weeks. Consistently warm summer temperatures lengthened the ripening period. Many sites began harvest three weeks later than a typical year.
- October was warm and dry, allowing the grapes to hang a bit longer, creating depth without sugar accumulation.

### VINEYARDS

- 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.
- Vineyard sites also included the Horse Heaven Hills (for texture and body) and the Wahluke Slope (for aromatics and complexity).

### 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.

**COLUMBIA-CREST.COM**

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