



#### Varietal Composition

87% merlot  
13% cabernet sauvignon

#### Bottling Date

April 26, 2005

#### Alcohol

14.6% by Volume

#### Oak

18 months

#### Release Date

Spring 2006

#### Production:

748 cases 750 ml

75 cases 375 ml

11 cases 1.5L

This 2003 Columbia Valley Merlot is produced from grapes grown at some of the finest vineyards in Washington State. These include Woodward Canyon Estate and Pepper Bridge in the Walla Walla Valley, Klipsun on Red Mountain and Sagemoor and Champoux in the Columbia Valley. Merlot ripened beautifully in 2003, producing a wine of great concentration and expression.

This Merlot was pumped over and punched down by hand two to three times per day in small stainless steel tanks. After pressing, settling, and racking the various lots were moved to mostly new French barrels for aging and maturation. Following final racking, the wine was assembled and bottled in April of 2005, then laid down in our cellars for additional development.

The 2003 vintage was the warmest vintage on record for Washington State. The wine shows extraordinary complexity, definition, and focus. The ability to blend with such fantastic vineyards has produced a red wine where the purity of Washington merlot simply explodes in the mouth! Firm, mature tannins give this wine its backbone; it will require some patience. I absolutely love the proportion of this wine and, though it may be consumed now, it will show even better with a year or so of bottle age.

#### **The Reviews:**

##### *Tastings, March 2006*

Brilliant ruby red hue. Black cherry, charcoal, tar and black mint aromas. Medium-full to full-bodied, this has an explosion of black cherry fruit, a generous mid-palate and a beautifully structured finish with youthful tannins, ample, but nicely integrated oak and lively acidity. Meant for the cellar. *Cellar Selection*, 93

##### *Wine Spectator, June 15, 2006*

Ripe and peppery, with a smoky edge to the generous cherry, plum and licorice flavors, lingering effectively on the round finish. Merlot, Syrah and Cabernet Sauvignon. Drink now through 2010. 90