



# HORSE HEAVEN HILLS AMERICAN VITICULTURAL AREA



## HORSE HEAVEN HILLS FACTS

**Location** South central Washington state along the Columbia River in Paterson, Washington, home of Columbia Crest winery

**Size** 570,000 acres

**Planted Vineyards** 6,040 acres  
**Columbia Crest vineyards** 2,500 acres

**First Planting** 1972, Mercer Vineyard

**Elevation** 200 feet at the area's southern boundary to 1,800 feet at its northern boundary

**Soil** Loamy sands, sandy loams and silt loams

**Climate** Semi-arid; annual rainfall averages 9 inches

**Vineyards** 20

**Wineries** 5  
 Columbia Crest, Chateau Ste. Michelle Canoe Ridge Estate, Alder Ridge, Destiny Ridge and Zefina

**Major Grape varieties** Chardonnay, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Syrah

According to local historical records in 1857 rancher James Kinney was camping in the range of hills in south-central Washington. When he woke up to discover his herd had wandered up a mountainside and into an upland plain where they were munching on succulent bunch grass. "Surely this is Horse Heaven," Kinney commented. The area has been known as the Horse Heaven Hills ever since.

## DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS

	FEATURES	BENEFITS
TOPOGRAPHY	The terrain consists of south-sloping, well-drained sandy soils, open and dry plains.	The south-facing slopes provide excellent sun exposure for grape ripening and good air drainage that protects vineyards during winter months.
WIND	Strong wind patterns, up to 30% greater than in other Columbia Valley areas, are unique to the Horse Heaven Hills.	Strong winds reduce canopy size and density, creating better sun exposure, an unfavorable environment for vineyard pests, and evens ripening by moderating temperature extremes.
TEMPERATURE	Warmer growing season temperatures result in an earlier harvest.	Grapes are fully mature at harvest with unique characteristics ideal for "single vineyard" wines. An earlier harvest also decreases the risk of fall frost.
PRECIPITATION	Annual rainfall averages 9" with the majority accumulated during dormancy so supplemental irrigation is crucial.	Grape growers have ultimate control over how much and when to irrigate vineyards. Judicious water use prevents excessive vine canopy growth, yielding grapes with balanced characteristics.

## TIMELINE

