

# COLUMBIA · CREST®

JUAN MUÑOZ OCA

RED WINEMAKER

Juan Muñoz Oca is the red winemaker at Columbia Crest Winery in Paterson, Washington. Columbia Crest is the leading producer of premium wine in Washington state.

He works with Head Winemaker Ray Einberger to craft the red wines in Columbia Crest's acclaimed Two Vines, Grand Estates, H3, and Reserve programs.

Born and raised in Mendoza, Argentina, Muñoz Oca came under the tutelage of his grandfather, cellar master at the prestigious Bodegas Toso winery, at a young age. The older man instilled in him a love and respect for wine, as well as for his family's Spanish/Italian culture, that was to become the root of a lifelong passion for winemaking. He picked his first grapes at the age of eight, later took an after-school job in a wine cellar, and spent his vacations helping his grandfather with harvest.

During his college years, Muñoz Oca gained more wine industry experience during stints at Navarro Correas and La Rural wineries. After graduating with honors from Argentina's National University of Cuyo with degrees in agricultural engineering and winemaking, he studied viticulture in Ribera del Duero, Spain and joined the winemaking team at Terrazas de los Andes, an Argentine premium winery owned by French giant Chandon.

Though Muñoz Oca planned to study viticulture and enology at UC Davis, a meeting with the legendary Dr. Robert Wamplé, then a top viticulturalist at Washington State University, convinced him to head further north. In the summer of 2001, he began interning with the viticulture team at Ste. Michelle Wine Estates, and later that year began working at Columbia Crest. With time out for stints at Bleasdale Vineyards in Australia and Bordeaux's Chateau Puy Guilhem, he's been at Columbia Crest ever since.

At the age of 33, Muñoz Oca completed his 17th vintage. Although his winemaking experience stretches across the globe – he has worked harvests in Bordeaux, South Australia, Mendoza, and Washington – it is his time at Columbia Crest that has been the most meaningful, he says.

"Working at Columbia Crest has really taught me the importance of integrity in winemaking," he says. "The perfect grape-growing climate, the best viticultural practices, and a team committed to crafting the best bottle of wine vintage after vintage is what Columbia Crest's winemaking is all about. It is our terroir and our sense of place that makes Columbia Crest different."



© Kevin Cruff

*"The perfect grape-growing climate, the best viticultural practices, and a team committed to making the best bottle of wine vintage after vintage is what Columbia Crest's winemaking is all about."*

*Juan Muñoz Oca*  
RED WINEMAKER

