

HORSE HEAVEN HILLS 2007 MERLOT COLUMBIA · CREST

The vineyards in Horse Heaven Hills are the source and inspiration behind the H3 wines. The hills have been home to the Columbia Crest winery for more than two decades, and it is this heritage, combined with innovative winemaking and vineyard knowledge, that allow our winemaker to create wines that capture the unique *terroir* of the region.

Growing Season

- The mild winter allowed the vines to remain in good shape throughout the cold months.
- In May, one to two weeks before bloom, temperatures spiked to 100 degrees for about a week.
- The heat spike led to a smaller canopy which allowed for more light penetration, and contributed to good flavor development in the fruit. The hot temperatures also contributed to smaller berries with concentrated flavors.
- During fruit set the weather conditions were favorable and the summer saw mild to average temperatures.
- Veraison started 10 days ahead of average.
- At the beginning of harvest, temperatures were moderate, and September weather was ideal for harvest.

Vineyards

- The Horse Heaven Hills vineyards are located 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.
- The terrain consists of south-facing slopes that provide excellent sun exposure for grape ripening, and good air drainage which protects the vineyards during the winter months.
- Well-drained sandy soils have low fertility and low water-holding capacity, allowing precise control of vine growth patterns.
- Strong wind patterns, which are unique to the Horse Heaven Hills, reduce canopy size and density, create better sun exposure, and contribute to even ripening by moderating temperature extremes.

Vinification

- Grapes were crushed at 30% whole-berry to retain the fruit quality.
- Fermentation lasted 7-14 days on the skins to extract optimum fruit and structural components.
- Various yeasts were used to maintain fruit flavors and complexity.
- Malolactic fermentation occurred in stainless steel tanks and oak barrels.
- Blending occurred shortly after malolactic fermentation.
- The wine was barrel aged in 33% new American and French oak, and 67% older oak for 14-18 months.

Tasting Notes

"The H3 Merlot entices the nose with spicy blackberry aromas and then explodes across the palate with slight dusty, earthy, and rich berry notes which cumulate in the seductive, velvety, cocoa finish." -Ray Einberger, Winemaker



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2007
MERLOT

Vineyards:	Horse Heaven Hills
Harvest Date:	September 27, 2007
Blend:	79% Merlot 11% Cabernet Sauvignon 6% Cabernet Franc 4% Syrah
Fermentation:	7-14 days on skins
Yeasts:	Premier Cuvee CSM
Alcohol:	14.5%
Total Acidity:	0.54 g/100ml
pH:	3.75