

2005 MERLOT

GROWING SEASON

- ▶ August 15 marked the beginning of the earliest harvest on record.
- ▶ Warm summer months contributed to the uniformity of berry maturation.
- ▶ A temperature drop in late summer cooled the vineyards and allowed the grapes extra hang time to enhance flavor and aromatic development.
- ▶ Moderate weather conditions during harvest contributed to mature fruit with intense flavors, good sugar development, and high natural acidity across varieties.

VINEYARDS

- ▶ Grand Estates Merlot is harvested from vineyards located predominantly on the Horse Heaven Hills (which contributes texture and body) and the Wahluke Slope (for aromatics and complexity.)
- ▶ 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.

VINIFICATION

- ▶ Grapes were crushed with 20% whole berries remaining.
- ▶ Grapes fermented on skins for 6-7 days with stainless steel and open top, rotary, and standard fermenters used to extract softness, complexity, and color.
- ▶ Malolactic fermentation occurred in the barrels and tanks.
- ▶ Wine aged 14-16 months.
- ▶ The oak regime featured 25% new French and American oak barrels.
- ▶ Cabernet Franc and Cabernet Sauvignon contributed softness and further fruit dimension to the final blend.

VINEYARDS ▶ 100 % COLUMBIA VALLEY

HARVEST DATE ▶ SEPTEMBER 16, 2005

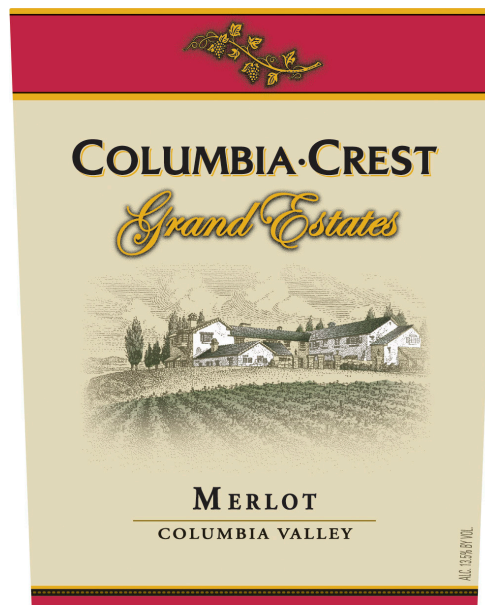
BLEND ▶ 94% MERLOT, 5% CABERNET SAUVIGNON,
1% CABERNET FRANC

FERMENTATION ▶ 6-8 DAYS ON SKINS, PREMIER CUVÉE,
PASTEUR RED AND D254 YEASTS.

ALCOHOL ▶ 13.5%

TOTAL ACIDITY ▶ 0.53G/100ML

PH ▶ 3.66



TASTING NOTES

“This complex, artisanally crafted wine offers classic Merlot spice, ripe cherry fruit, and cocoa aromatics which persist on the palate. The balance of wood and black fruits creates a velvety, seductively smooth finish.”

Ray Einberger

RAY EINBERGER ▶ COLUMBIA CREST ▶ WINEMAKER