

VINEYARDS

Grown in the Columbia Valley in south-central Washington State.

THE BLEND

72% cabernet sauvignon
26% merlot
2% syrah

VINTAGE

Spring in the Columbia Valley was warm and sunny, with excellent bloom and set and a moderate number of berry clusters per vine. Although cool summer temperatures slightly delayed the start of harvest, careful canopy management and a rigorous program of crop thinning helped bring the fruit to optimum ripeness. Harvest began in mid-September and continued into late October, delivering grapes brimming with varietal intensity.

VINIFICATION

Crop thinning in early summer following veraison reduced yields to an average of just over two tons per acre. Following harvest, the lots were individually fermented in stainless steel tanks on their skins at 85° F for up to 18 days. The lots were individually aged for 21 months in 70% new and 30% one-year-old oak barrels, primarily from the Alliers and Nevers forests of France and were gently racked with gravity every three months. Chateau Ste. Michelle winemaker, Mike Januik, and enologist-managing director of Marchesi Antinori, Renzo Cotarella, selected the finest lots of the

vintage for the final blend, and the wine was bottled, unfined, in December, 1997, and cellar aged for 16 months prior to release. 13.5% alcohol, total acidity .59, pH 3.49, production 988 cases.

WINEMAKERS' NOTES

Sensational black plum color with intense aromas, especially of dark black fruits including blackberry and black currant, with hints of green olive, black pepper and mocha. Predominant mouth flavors are of black currants and blackberry, with vanilla, clove, tobacco, and spice nuances. It has a well-integrated, round structure and a hedonistic, silky, supple, long finish.

VINTNERS

Col Solare is a winemaking partnership that began in the vineyards of the Columbia Valley with Piero Antinori's enduring attraction to unique viticultural regions. The idea for the wine took root when Antinori met Allen Shoup of Chateau Ste. Michelle and the similarities between the two vintners proved to be as strong as their differences. Known for their eagerness in charting unexplored territory and for challenging conventional thinking, both Antinori and Shoup are acknowledged today for having pioneered wine Renaissances that have led to worldwide esteem for the wines of Tuscany and Washington State, respectively. With the strength of the Columbia Valley as the foundation, along with each vintner's demonstrated willingness to step outside his proven perspective to try to create something unique, Col Solare was born.

