

# COLUMBIA CREST

GRAND ESTATES



## TASTING NOTES

*"The Grand Estates merlot has a rich aromatic profile with notes of chocolate and dark cherries. On the palate our Merlot has complex fruit flavors followed by a smooth, velvety finish. Pair this wine with Blue cheese, duck, beef, veal and dark chocolate."*

JUAN MUÑOZ OCA, WINEMAKER

**VINEYARDS** Columbia Valley

**FIRST HARVEST DATE** September 20, 2012

**BLEND** 95% Merlot, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon

**FERMENTATION** 6-10 days on skins

**BARREL REGIME** 1/3 new oak for 14 months

**ALCOHOL** 13.5%

**TOTAL ACIDITY** 0.56 g/100ml

**PH** 3.75

## 2012 MERLOT

### GROWING SEASON

- Spring temperatures in Eastern Washington started off relatively cool but rose quickly, and the region soon settled in to a more typical weather pattern.
- Summer was predictably warm without any prolonged excessive heat events, with temperatures rarely breaking 100° Fahrenheit.
- Late summer and early fall brought on slightly cooler daytime highs and a significant diurnal shift, a pattern that continued well into October.
- A few sporadic rain showers in mid-to-late October were quickly dissipated by persistent winds and had no effect on the harvest.
- Overall the 2012 harvest was outstanding; the red wines are flavorful and rich with ripe tannins.

### VINEYARDS

- 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.
- Vineyard sites also included the Horse Heaven Hills (for texture and body) and the Wahluke Slope (for aromatics and complexity).

### VINIFICATION

- Grapes were crushed with 30% whole berries remaining.
- Fermentation lasted 6 - 10 days on skins to extract optimum fruit and textural components.
- Blending occurred immediately after fermentation.
- Malolactic fermentation occurred in a combination of stainless steel tanks and oak barrels.
- The wine barrel-aged in 1/3 new oak for 14 months.

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