H3

HORSE HEAVEN HILLS
2016 H3 MERLOT

Vineyards in the Horse Heaven Hills are the source and inspiration behind the H3 wines. The hills have been home to Columbia Crest winery for more than two decades. Winemaker Juan Muñoz-Oca combines innovative and traditional winemaking practices to highlight bold flavors in the wines that capture the unique *terroir* of the region.

GROWING SEASON

- The 2016 vintage experienced the best of both worlds with a hot spring and early summer. A cooler than normal end of the ripening season allowed the wines to have ripeness, yet maintain freshness and elegance.

- The early dry and warm spring, combined with cooler temperatures in August and September, slowed down ripening and resulted in the longest harvest on record in Washington State (August 15-November 15).

- Overall, 2016 saw very favorable growing conditions, producing wines with nicely resolved tannins and maturity.

VINEYARDS

- The Horse Heaven Hills vineyards are located in Eastern Washington. This region is mostly dry with less precipitation due to the rain shadow effect from the surrounding Cascade Mountain range.

- The terrain consists of south-facing slopes that provide excellent sun exposure for grape ripening, and protection from cold airflow during the winter months.

- Strong wind patterns in the Horse Heaven Hills reduce canopy size and density and contribute to even ripening by moderating temperature extremes.

VINIFICATION

- Grapes were crushed and then fermented 7-14 days on the skins to extract optimum fruit and structural components.

- Malolactic fermentation occurred in stainless steel tanks and oak barrels.

- The wine was barrel aged in 66% older oak and in 34% new oak barrels, both French and American, for approximately 15 months.

TASTING NOTES

"This medium-bodied Merlot delivers aromas of spice and blackberry with the perfect balance of earth, cocoa and ripe cherry notes on the palate. The complex flavors are followed by a smooth, velvety finish."

Juan Muñoz-Oca, Winemaker

Vineyards:	Horse Heaven Hills
Blend:	100% Merlot
Alcohol:	14.5%
TA:	0.54 g/100ml
pH:	3.80

Food Pairings:
Grilled Salmon, Roasted Lamb, Wild Game, and Balsamic or Tomato-Based Sauces

COLUMBIA CREST

www.columbiacrest.com