



2003 *Fidelitas Merlot*

columbia valley

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Our 2003 Merlot is a wine of such unparalleled quality and richness of character, it's destined to be envied the world over. Highlighted by intense chocolate, cherry, blackberry, vanilla and spice notes, this ripe, lush red offers great length on the palate and well-integrated tannins—key characteristics of a classic Merlot.

VINTAGE

2003 was one of the warmest growing seasons and harvests in the last 20 years. This resulted in smaller berry size and lighter cluster weights, which produced lower yields. The unusually hot growing season resulted in early ripening in the warmer areas and a quick start to harvest with flavorful ripe fruit in the early part of the vintage. Modest precipitation in August and September helped cool down the vineyards, slowed down ripening and allowed many of the vineyards in the cooler regions to benefit from the extra hang time which improved fruit flavors and intensity.

VINEYARDS

This is 100% Merlot from some of the very best vineyards in Washington State including: Conner-Lee Vineyard (50%), Klipsun Vineyard (25%), Wahluke Vineyard (15%), and Milbrandt - Katherine Leone Vineyard (10%).

FERMENTATION AND AGING

All the fruit for the Merlot was hand picked and sorted in the vineyard. Upon arrival at the winery, the fruit was destemmed and crushed directly to a small fermentation tank where the wines were punched down three times daily. Average primary fermentation was seven days in length. Upon completion of fermentation, the wines were gently pressed off and were put into barrels immediately. Once fermentation was complete in barrel, the wine was put through malolactic fermentation immediately. While aging in oak barrels, the wines were racked quarterly to naturally clarify the wine.

VARIETAL COMPOSITION

100% Merlot

OAK AGING

The wine was racked to 100% small oak barrels (French and American), with approximately 50% new oak, and was barrel-aged for 18 months with four rackings.

TECHNICAL

Bottled 360 cases; pH 3.73, acid 0.58 g/100ml, 14.2% alcohol by volume, <0.02% residual sugar

RELEASE DATE

August 1, 2005

