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2009 Columbia Valley Merlot

VINTAGE

The spring of 2009 was cooler and wetter than usual delaying bud break by a few weeks, but cool weather worries quickly subsided with the arrival of warm, dry weather in June. Temperatures continued to climb in July and stayed warm through August. Ideal weather conditions in September and into early October ripened grapes beautifully at a record pace resulting in a short, compressed harvest that wrapped up just before an unusual early fall freeze hit the Columbia Valley on October 10th.

VINEYARDS

One of the advantages of having made wine in the Columbia Valley since the mid-1980s is the opportunity it's given me to work with some of the most dedicated growers in the industry. Our Columbia Valley wines are made from a short list of vineyards I consider to be among the best in the state. The diversity of these vineyards-representing many of the most mature, carefully managed sites in Washington-provides for a full range of fruit expression that allows me to craft complex, multi-layered wines true to Columbia Valley *terroir* as well as the varietal character of the grapes. Our 2009 Columbia Valley Merlot includes grapes from Champoux, Ciel du Cheval, Klipsun and Weinbau Vineyards.

WINEMAKING

After destemming and crushing, grapes were fermented in small lots for an average time of eight days. After being pressed off, each lot of wine was moved to predominately new French oak barrels for 18 months of barrel aging during which time the wine was racked every 3-4 months.

TASTING NOTES

This well-structured, medium-bodied Merlot shows lots of raspberry, vanilla and spice notes in the nose that complement rich black fruit and cocoa flavors in the mouth. Generous in texture and length, it should continue to improve with age for the next 5-10 years.



ANALYSIS AT BOTTLING

Total Acidity	0.55g/100ml
pH.....	3.72
Blend... ..	92% Merlot 7% Cabernet Sauvignon 1% Cabernet Franc
Cases.....	537
Bottling Date.....	June 16, 2011

Mike Januik, owner/winemaker