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2011 Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Syrah

VINTAGE

Although it was a cooler year and later harvest than is typical for the Columbia Valley, the 2011 vintage produced aromatic, flavorful wines with good acidity and balance. The season started slowly with June and July temperatures cooler than usual, but August conditions were similar to a typical year; and a heat wave in September allowed the grapes to finish off ripening nicely. The result: delicious wines notable for their expressive varietal character.

VINEYARDS

One characteristic contributing to the great success of Ciel du Cheval Vineyard is the high pH found in the loam topsoil of Red Mountain, courtesy of the calcium carbonate deposits left by the ancient Spokane floods. Temperatures in the vineyard rarely reach above 95°F which is ideal for vine development and fruit ripening. In fact, with just less than 3,000 “degree days” per growing season and as much as 3 more hours of sunlight per day than the Napa region, owner Jim Holmes is able to grow grapes with great concentration and balance.

WINEMAKING

After destemming and crushing, grapes were fermented on their skins for eight days. After being pressed off, this lot was aged for 20 months in 50% new French Oak barrels and 50% once used French Oak barrels to improve its already lengthy finish. Racking the wine every four months created pliant tannins and a bold, stylish structure.

TASTING NOTES

Ciel du Cheval Vineyard produces a Syrah which is very varietal in character. It is dark ruby red with plum, blackberry, and raspberry on the perfumed nose. There are notes of coffee and spice which balance the fruit flavors. It is well structured with great persistence on the finish.



ANALYSIS AT BOTTLING

Total Acidity	0.56g/100ml
pH.....	3.76
Blend.....	100% Syrah
Cases.....	197
Bottling Date.....	May 29, 2013

Mike Januik, owner/winemaker