

Wild Thyme

2015 | HORSE HEAVEN HILLS



Wallula Vineyard
97% Merlot
3% Cabernet Franc

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

pH: 3.89

TA: 4.9 g/liter

RS: <0.5 g/liter

14.6% alc.

172 cases produced



*"I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine."*

Wm. Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream

Harvest and Winemaking

2015 was the warmest Washington vintage ever. The summer heat started early in June and did not let up through the end of harvest in September. Fortunately the warmth was consistent and lack big spikes in heat.

The vintage was the earliest we ever starting picking grapes and the earliest we ever finished. 2.72 tons of Wallula Merlot block 21 was hand harvested on September 11, 2015. (25.4 brix, 3.83 pH, and 5.21 g/l total acidity).

The grapes were sorted by hand and destemmed to keep as many whole berries as possible. The wine was fermented by yeasts native to the vineyard. The grapes were punched down twice daily until completion of fermentation. Only the free run wine was retained for the Wild Thyme.

The Merlot was aged for 22 months in 7 barrels (5 French and 2 American Oak) before bottling in July of 2017.

Tasting

Attractive dark red hue. Sweet black plums, toasted vanilla bean, and clove-aromas predominate. There is an attractive hint of salinity under the fruit and oak character. Mouthfeel is concentrated, rich, seamless, and smooth all the way to the finish. We taste flavors of plums, cherries, toasty oak spices, clove, and hints of licorice.

Thoughts on Merlot

Loosely translated as *Blackbird* (mérle) in French, Merlot is native to Bordeaux and finds its greatest expressions on the Right Bank of the Gironde river. Merlot ripens earlier than Cabernet Sauvignon or Franc. However the Merlot vine is very sensitive winter injury.

Washington Merlot has a richness and power unsurpassed in the world. Our wonderful vineyard sites create a wine that is hedonistic and voluptuous, yet age worthy and serious. The challenge is planting Merlot in vineyards that are less prone to winter damage.

Previous vintages of the Wild Thyme were a Merlot style bordeaux blend. With this vintage I found all my blends could not improve on the Merlot that Wallula Vineyard produced.

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