

DILLON



2022 Walla Walla Merlot

Single Vineyard. Single Varietal. Native Fermentation.

VINEYARD		Pepper Bridge Vineyard
APPELLATION		Walla Walla Valley
BOTTLING DATE		November 2024
COMPOSITION		100% Merlot
RELEASE DATE		Spring 2026



VINTAGE SUMMARY

The 2022 vintage in Walla Walla swung between three extremes: a cold spring, a brief midsummer heat spike, and a record-warm October that carried fruit to ideal ripeness. The long finish delivered full phenolic maturity and fresh acidity. The result? Wines of vivid fruit, moderate alcohol, and elegant structure.

VINEYARD and WINEMAKING NOTES

Pepper Bridge Vineyard sits directly behind the winery on elevated terraces shaped by Ice Age floods—mineral-rich loess over deeper flood silts. Close enough to the Blue Mountains to feel the pull of cooler air, it gives Merlot clarity, pace, and a clean finish. Noteworthy: the rows of old vines that grew these grapes were removed the following year for the road expansion. This wine is the last voice of that small piece of the vineyard.

Harvested Oct 4 in the cool morning, then destemmed and sorted. The fruit sat cold for three days with daily foot treading (including a cameo from my kids). Early on, it was showing purity but lacked dimension, so we stayed close and let it tell us what it needed—one careful pumpover, then a steady pattern of twice-daily punchdowns through pressing. Native fermentation showed real activity around day nine. Five weeks on skins, then to barrel.

Full native malolactic finished late the following spring. Aged 24 months in French oak on gross lees (half once-used, half neutral), then rested 15 months in bottle before release. No racking until bottling. Bottled unfined and unfiltered.

TASTING NOTES

Merlot is one of the wine world's most underrated varieties—when it's grown and made right. This Merlot lands right in the just-ripe zone: generous red fruit and black cherry up front, with enough lift to keep it moving. The aromatics are open and immediate, and the palate has that satisfying, rounded feel Merlot does so well—without heaviness.

As it opens, the spice turns warm and classic—sandalwood and a faint cinnamon note—more old cellar than sweetness. Fine-grained, orderly tannins, a clean finish, and a quiet savory edge that keeps it grounded. Young now, but it keeps giving with air. Drink now–2034+.