

2010 Cuvée Elena 420 cases

Tasting Notes

Our Southern Rhone inspired blend was selected from our most balanced and elegant barrels from the 2010 vintage. Cuvée Elena delivers black cherry and raspberry aromas and flavors, with delicate violet perfume, complemented by hints of spice, garrigue and graceful length. This wine is mouth filling and intensely satisfying with with a fine, silky finish.

Harvest Notes

Varietals: 57% Grenache / 32% Mourvedre / 5% Syrah /
5% Counoise / 1% Carignan

Vineyards: McKinley Springs Vineyard, Alder Ridge Vineyard, Ciel du Cheval Vineyard,
Heart of the Hill Vineyard, Coyote Canyon Vineyard

Vineyards

From McKinley Springs Vineyard comes Counoise and Grenache; both late ripening and usually the last grapes we pick each harvest. Planted at 1,100' in elevation on Warden sandy silt loam soils with north south row orientation, the canopy is trained VSP with the west side left to "flop" to protect the grapes from the hot afternoon sun. Shoot thinning and green thinning occur to ensure an even intense crop. Perhaps it is the elevation, or the soils, but this vineyard gives us some of the best balanced fruit we work with.

Alder Ridge Vineyard yields wines of intensity and purity. Planted in a bowl along the banks of the Columbia River, with one of the longest growing seasons in the state, it is ideal for reliably ripening Mediterranean varietals.

The forces that helped form Ciel du Cheval, Heart of the Hill and the Red Mountain geology in general, were truly gigantic. The deep bedrock of most of the Columbia Basin is basalt, formed from the massive lava outflows caused by intense volcanic activity. On top of the basalt lie layers of sediment deposited by repeated ancient floods – the largest floods ever recorded. On top of the sediment are layers of sand and silt from eons of erosion and weathering. The high alkalinity and high calcium carbonate content produce wines of incredible structure and longevity.

Grenache is sourced from Northridge Vineyard, managed by Milbrandt Vineyards, and lies on the north edge of the Wahluke Slope AVA. Soils are extremely rocky, with southern exposure. Vines are trained VSP with a moderate density. Grenache from this site delivers classic red fruits while retaining acids.

Coyote Canyon Vineyard lies in the northern part of the Horse Heaven Hills and straddles the Missoula Flood highwater mark. The Mourvedre is planted to a steep south facing slope in rocky soils at 1,200' in elevation. The high calcium content of the soils translates into wines with great fruit expression while retaining bright acidity. The vines are trained Vertical Shoot Positioning up and down the slope face.

Vinification

The fruit was hand harvested and transported to the winery in the early morning. Grenache, Counoise and Carignan were de-stemmed, inoculated in small open tops with manual pigeage then aged in neutral barrels. For Mourvedre and Syrah, inoculated fermentation occurred in 33 hectoliter concrete cubes, with a max temp of 81 degrees, twice daily pump-overs and early delestage. Syrah was also fermented with 20–30% whole clusters This bottling is 100% free run juice that was put directly into 4–7 year old barrels, some in 700L size. Unfined. A light, polish filtration preceded bottling. Barrel time of 16 months.

