

2011 Cuvée Elena

330 cases

Tasting Notes

Our Southern Rhone inspired blend was selected from our most balanced and elegant barrels from the 2011 vintage. Cuvée Elena delivers blackberry 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 a fine, silky finish.

Harvest Notes

Varietals: 37% Mourvedre / 30% Syrah / 26% Grenache
5% Carignan / 2% Cinsault

Vineyards: 53% Red Mountain: Heart of the Hill, Ciel du Cheval, Grand Reve
37% Horse Heaven Hills: McKinley Springs, Alder Ridge, Coyote Canyon
5% Yakima Valley: Boushey
5% Columbia Gorge: Steep Creek Ranch

Vineyards

The forces that helped form **Ciel du Cheval**, **Heart of the Hill**, **Grand Reve** 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.

From **McKinley Springs Vineyard** comes Cinsault 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. Coyote Canyon Vineyard lies in the northern part of the Horse Heaven Hills and straddles the Missoula Flood high-water 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.

Located at high elevation, the celebrated **Boushey Vineyard** produces wines of distinct character with balanced acidity. Layered soils and long, cool, slow ripening time allow for complex flavor development. 2011 was the first harvest using Boushey fruit for Syncline Winery. We are so impressed by the quality, delicious complexity and brilliant acidity, we plan to keep working with this vineyard for the long term.

Steep Creek Ranch is our home vineyard. It is the block you see if you have visited the winery in Lyle. The vineyard, along with our entire property are managed with Biodynamic techniques and philosophy. This first acre at Steep Creek was an experimental block planted by the owners of Elk Cove winery in 2001. We purchased the property from them at the end of 2003. Steep Creek, as a bottled embodiment of our passion for great wines is only the beginning of what we would like to showcase from our future estate plantings.

Vinification

Grenache, Cinsault and Carignan were de-stemmed, inoculated in small open tops with manual pigeage then aged in neutral barrels. Mourvedre and Syrah were inoculated and fermented 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.

