

## 2006 Cuvée Elena, Columbia Valley

Production: 248 cases

### Tasting Notes

Our Southern Rhone inspired blend, Cuveé Elena, was selected from our best lots of grapes. Showing great intensity and balance, the Cuveé Elena delivers bramble fruits, plums, sauvage and tarry aspects with tremendous length. Classic notes of spice, blackberries and animal from the Mourvedre blend with the bright raspberry of Grenache, all tied together with the richness and garrigue aromas of Syrah and Cinsault. Mouth filling and intensely satisfying.

### Harvest Notes

Appellation: Columbia Valley

Harvest Dates: Late September Through Late October

Varietals: Grenache/Mourvedre/Syrah/Cinsault

Vineyards: North Ridge/Coyote Canyon/McKinley Springs

Northridge Vineyard is 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 plum and darker fruits while retaining acids.

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 1200' in elevation. The high calcium content of the soils translates into wines with great fruit expression while retaining bright acidity. The vines are trained VSP up and down the slope face.

McKinley Springs Vineyard is one of the first vineyards in Washington State to begin harvest. Syrah typically ripens in the first weeks of September and gives us some of the most concentrated grapes we work with. Planted at 1100 feet in elevation on Warden sandy silt loam soils with north south row orientation. 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 concentrated crop. Perhaps it is the elevation, or the soils, but this vineyard gives us some of the best balanced fruit we work with.

### Fermentation and Aging

The fruit was hand harvested into 800 pound harvest boxes and transported to the winery in the early morning. All fruit was de-stemmed with no crushing. Wines were cold soaked followed by inoculated fermentation. Pressing occurred between 10 and 12 days past inoculation and wine was barreled in a blend of two year old French oak 225 L, 500L and 700 L barrels. Barrel time, 16 months.