



NORTHSTAR

WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON



DAVID “MERF” MERFELD

WINEMAKER

As a young man growing up in Greene, Iowa, David Merfeld never guessed he'd one day become a winemaker crafting world-class Merlots in Walla Walla, Washington. Since joining the Northstar winemaking team in 2001 he has done just that, learning the ropes as an enologist and assistant winemaker before becoming the winery's winemaker in 2005.

“Merf,” as he is known to all, began his journey towards Northstar in 1990, when, impressed by the quality of the Northwest's microbreweries, he relocated to Washington to pursue a career in craft brewing. When the opportunity arose to apply his knowledge of fermentation science to making wine at Northstar, he jumped at the chance to become involved in the burgeoning Washington wine industry.

“Washington is one of the most exciting wine regions in the world, and Washington Merlot is the purest expression of our unique terroir,” says Merf. “When I got the offer to make Merlots at Northstar, no one had to ask me twice.”

Northstar's commitment to making Merlots that rank among the world's best begins in the vineyards. Merf quickly proved to have an expert's eye for sourcing and blending the highest quality fruit from around the Columbia Valley.

“Merf has what all great winemakers must have: a sixth sense about grape selection and exacting standards when blending the best of the best from the vineyards,” said legendary California winemaker Jed Steele, a Northstar consultant who has worked with Merf since 2001.

Once fruit is selected from the state's top vineyard blocks, Merf and his team guide it through a gentle sorting and whole-berry fermentation. Then the toolbox comes out. State-of-the-art winery equipment, cutting edge tannin research, and old fashioned instinct all aid Merf in creating the final blends of Northstar's highly acclaimed Merlots from both the Walla Walla Valley and Columbia Valley designations.

“Winemaking is a constant learning experience and the vineyard, lab, and equipment resources we are fortunate to have at Northstar give us a great advantage in making the kinds of wines we strive for,” says Merf. “It's incredibly exciting for me to see the way these wines take shape and grow into what they eventually become – a great experience in the glass.”