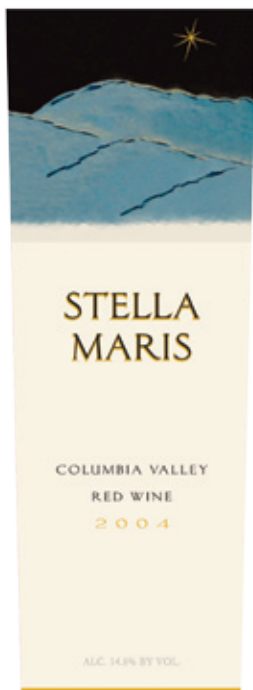


STELLA MARIS

2004 COLUMBIA VALLEY



TECHNICAL DATA

TOTAL ACIDITY	0.54G/100ML
PH	3.74
ALCOHOL	14.5%
BLEND	88% MERLOT
	10% CABERNET SAUVIGNON
	2% PETIT VERDOT

VINTAGE OVERVIEW

The 2004 growing season got off to a warm start followed by a cooler period during bloom. The hot, dry summer months created uniform berry maturation with intense flavors, good sugar development and high natural acidity. Warm temperatures during the last days of summer produced excellent ripening conditions. Cooler temperatures and intermittent light rain in mid-September slowed ripening and extended hang time. 2004 followed a freeze year resulting in a lighter crop throughout the region.

VINEYARDS

Diversity of vineyards and sub-appellations within the Columbia Valley are Northstar's hallmarks. Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Malbec and Syrah were sourced from the best vineyard sites within the Columbia Valley and Walla Walla Valley. Vines are 5 to 20 years old and yield grapes with concentrated varietal flavors of cherry and plum. Fruit from 8 different vineyard sites and 14 individual lots contributed to the blend.

WINEMAKING

At harvest, grapes were destemmed and crushed leaving 25% whole berries intact. Lots were inoculated with *Premier Cuvée* and *Fermirouge* yeasts and fermented separately for five days with daily punch downs. The wine was racked into barrels for malolactic fermentation and aging. Lots were racked at three month intervals for clarity. The wine aged in 60% French and 40% American oak with 65% new oak. The blend was created after 17 months in the barrel.

TASTING NOTES

This rich and pleasant wine opens with aromatics of vanilla, cherry and raspberry, along with bright, lively red fruit, leather and saddle notes. Concentrated strawberry cream on the palate leads to a soft, smooth and supple toffee-almond finish.

– David “Merf” Merfeld, Winemaker