



NORTHSTAR

2003 MERLOT COLUMBIA VALLEY



TECHNICAL DATA

TOTAL ACIDITY	0.58G/100ML
PH	3.65
ALCOHOL	14.6%
BLEND	82% MERLOT 15% CABERNET SAUVIGNON 3% PETIT VERDOT

VINTAGE OVERVIEW

The 2003 growing season began with a normal bud break-to-bloom cycle in early April. Warm, dry and constant weather conditions during the summer months created uniform berry maturation. Hot temperatures during the waning days of summer created excellent ripening conditions. Modest spells of cooling precipitation in September ensured physiological maturity and flavor development at harvest.

VINEYARDS

Diversity of vineyards and sub-appellations within the Columbia Valley are Northstar's hallmarks. The Northstar team works diligently with each grower to achieve specific fruit quality and yield parameters. Vines average 15 years old and yield grapes with concentrated varietal flavors of cherry and plum with elegant tannins. Fruit from 11 separate vineyards and 18 blocks contributed to the final blend.

WINEMAKING

At harvest, grapes were held separately, destemmed and crushed with 25% whole berries remaining. Grapes fermented on the skins for five days with daily punch downs to extract flavor, colors and fine tannins. The wine was placed into 70% French and 30% American oak barrels, where it underwent malolactic fermentation. The barrel rotation included 70% new barrels. The lots aged separately for 18 months with barrel-to-barrel racking occurring at three month intervals.

TASTING NOTES

Structured with power and elegance, the rich, concentrated front and middle palates roll seamlessly into the generous, silky finish. Aromatics and flavors offer concentrated black cherry, plums and currants.

– David “Merf” Merfeld, Winemaker

