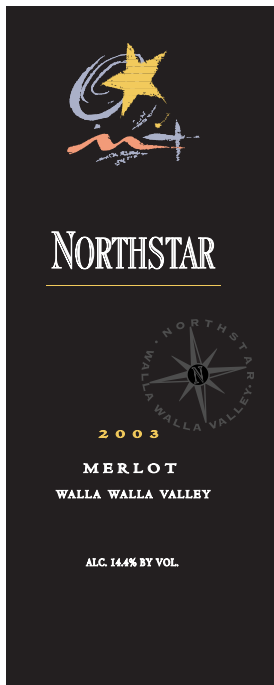




NORTHSTAR

2003 MERLOT WALLA WALLA VALLEY



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

Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon from some of Walla Walla's best vineyard sites are showcased here. Planted in 1995, Vanessa Vineyards is located on the Oregon side of the appellation and contributed both Merlot and Cabernet Sauvignon grapes to this vintage. Windrow Vineyard produces fruit with small berries as a result of little to no added water through irrigation. The resulting fruit provides concentrated black cherry flavors, structure and complexity to the blend.

WINEMAKING

Grapes were destemmed, crushed and inoculated with *Premier Cuvée* yeast to begin the five-day fermentation. The must was punched down daily during fermentation, and then it was racked into barrels to undergo malolactic fermentation. Racking occurred every three months for clarity during the 17-month aging process. The barrel regime included 65% French and 35% American oak, 65% new barrels. The final blend consists of fruit from 11 distinct vineyard blocks.

TASTING NOTES

Dusty malt, dried herbs and bright cherry flavors are balanced well into this smoothly-structured wine that concludes with a supple, lingering finish.

– David “Merf” Merfeld, Winemaker

TECHNICAL DATA

TOTAL ACIDITY	0.60G/100ML
PH	3.77
ALCOHOL	14.4%
BLEND	84% MERLOT
	12% CABERNET SAUVIGNON
	4% CABERNET FRANC