



NORTHSTAR

WALLA WALLA, WASHINGTON

Letter from the Winemaker



WINTER 2009

We've wrapped up the 2009 harvest, and what a stellar one it was! The Columbia Valley enjoyed a warm, picture-perfect summer with just enough cool days in late September and early October to extend the season and bring the crop in with a perfect balance of ripe, concentrated flavors and healthy acidity. In fact, 2009 reminds me a lot of the 2006 vintage, which yielded the wines in your winter club shipment. The 2006

Stella Maris, our unique blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah, with a dash of Petit Verdot, is a fun, fruit-forward red with plenty of rich flavors, but soft tannins, which makes it wonderfully approachable and drinkable in its youth. It does benefit from aeration, so I suggest decanting it an hour or so before serving. I love pairing Stella with simply prepared chicken, beef and lamb dishes, as well as mildly flavored, soft-ripening cheeses.

By comparison, our 2006 Syrah is a more deeply colored, intensely flavored and firmly structured red. Crafted from several of Walla Walla Valley's finest Syrah vineyards, including Minnick Hills and Anna Marie, it's a big, jammy, robust wine, the sort of red to pair with grilled pepper steak, venison, hearty stews and spicy sausages or ribs. We made only 112 cases of this exceptional Syrah – it's available solely to club members and in our tasting room – so stock up while you have the chance. By the way, if you open this big boy in the near future, be sure to decant it, because it's already thrown a small amount of sediment, a sure sign of a wine with color and flavor to spare.

As always, thanks for your support. Please enjoy the wines and have a festive holiday season.

David "Merf" Merfeld, Winemaker

WINTER WINE WONDERLAND

This holiday season, Northstar is going all out to stage several exciting events guaranteed to get you into the holiday spirit. The festivities commence Thanksgiving weekend in our tasting room, where we'll be pouring our current releases accompanied by holiday-themed music and German sausages served hot off the grill. A week later, the Walla Walla Holiday Barrel Tasting weekend (December 4 – 6) offers a rare opportunity to taste the 2009 vintage out of barrel, savor fine cheese and meet our winemakers. It's the perfect time to stock up on gifts for your wine loving friends and soak in Walla Walla's gorgeous winter scenery.

In 2010, we will be returning to three annual wine club shipments. The club selection focus will be on our Merlots and the Bordeaux-style varieties we blend with them (Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot and Malbec). There are some wonderful new Northstar wines on the horizon, but in the meantime, enjoy your delicious, limited-production winter selections this holiday season!

We hope to see you soon!

Jan Jones
Guest Services Manager





"This medium-bodied, very approachable wine opens with lovely blueberry and raspberry aromas. Each variety in the blend contributes concentrated fruit and layers of flavors, including blueberry, bright red fruit, white pepper, and a touch of orange zest. Enjoy!"

– David "Merf" Merfeld, Winemaker



"I love Walla Walla Syrah! This big, jammy, multi-layered wine boasts a wonderful mélange of flavors, including blackberry, blueberry, vanilla, orange peel, coconut, plum and white pepper. Full-bodied, lush and robust on the palate, it culminates in a long, rich finish. Enjoy!"

– David "Merf" Merfeld, Winemaker

VINTAGE OVERVIEW

The 2006 growing season began with a mild spring, followed by a hot, dry summer that produced balanced vine canopies and small berries with very concentrated flavors. Mild temperatures in August helped extend the ripening period into September and October, leading to fantastic fruit quality across the varietal spectrum.

WINEMAKING

Our 2006 "Stella" is a blend of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, and Syrah sourced from nine outstanding vineyards within the Columbia Valley and Walla Walla Valley. Indian Wells and Northstar Estate provided the Merlot while Cabernet Sauvignon was sourced from Windrow, Andrews, Horse Heaven, Northstar, and Loess vineyards. Anna Marie and Minnick Hills in Walla Walla supplied the Syrah, and Stone Tree Vineyard the Petit Verdot. After harvesting, the grapes were de-stemmed and crushed leaving 40% whole berries intact. Twelve separate vineyard lots were inoculated with Premier Cuvée yeast and fermented for seven days with daily punch-downs. After fermentation and pressing, the wines were transferred to barrels for malolactic fermentation and aging and racked at three-month intervals for clarity. After 17 months in 75% French and 25% American oak barrels, 60% new, the final blend was assembled.

TECHNICAL DATA

BLEND	35% CABERNET SAUVIGNON 29% MERLOT 28% SYRAH 8% PETIT VERDOT
ALCOHOL	14.4%
TOTAL ACIDITY	0.56G/100ML
PH	3.79

RETAIL PRICE \$29

MEMBER RE-ORDER PRICE \$20.30

Club members receive 30% off retail on this club selection through March 30, 2010.

To re-order your club selections, go to northstarmarlot.com or call our Concierge at 1-800-391-1409.

WINEMAKING

To make our limited-production, 100% Syrah, we select grapes from the very best Walla Walla Valley vineyard sites. In 2006, this included Minnick Hills and Anna Marie vineyards, which produce Syrah fruit with concentrated blackberry and blueberry varietal flavors balanced by elegant tannins. At harvest, the grapes were de-stemmed and crushed, leaving 40% whole berries intact. The various lots fermented for seven days with daily punch-downs, and then were transferred to barrels for malolactic fermentation and aging. During their 16 months in 47% French and 53% American oak barrels, 65% new, the wines were racked every three months for clarity prior to blending and bottling.

TECHNICAL DATA

BLEND	100% SYRAH
ALCOHOL	14.9%
TOTAL ACIDITY	0.58G/100ML
PH	3.83

RETAIL PRICE \$40

MEMBER RE-ORDER PRICE \$28

Club members receive 30% off retail on this club selection through March 30, 2010.

To re-order your club selections, go to northstarmarlot.com or call our Concierge at 1-800-391-1409.

PROVENCAL TUNA BRAISED IN RED WINE AND GREEN OLIVES

8 SERVINGS

INGREDIENTS:

2 lbs sushi grade ahi tuna, cut into 1 ½ inch thick steaks

2 Tbsp olive oil

2 small yellow onions, peeled and thinly julienned

2 Tbsp minced fresh garlic

2 lbs peeled and seeded tomatoes, chopped

2 bay leaves

bouquet garni- parsley, fresh thyme, celery leaves, green part of leek (tie all together or put in cheese cloth)

1 ½ cups Northstar Syrah

1 cup chicken or beef stock, preferably homemade

2 cups pitted green olives (picholine)

sea salt

fresh ground black pepper

fresh Italian parsley and thyme for chopping

lemon or red wine vinegar

Heat a heavy-duty casserole over medium-low heat; add the olive oil and onions. Sauté until the onions are soft, but not browned. Add the garlic and sauté about 1 more minute. Remove the onions and garlic from the pan and then turn the heat to high. Season the tuna with salt and pepper, then sear on both sides. Add the tomatoes, bay leaves, wine, stock, onions, bouquet garni, and olives. Reduce the heat to low and cover the pan. Simmer for about 45 minutes until the tuna is very tender. Remove the tuna, bouquet garni, and bay leaves. Reduce the sauce if too thin, adjust seasoning. Add red wine vinegar or lemon if needed to adjust the acid in the sauce. Add 1 Tbsp chopped fresh parsley and 1 Tbsp chopped fresh thyme.

PAIR WITH 2006
NORTHSTAR SYRAH,
COLUMBIA VALLEY



THE BIG DIPPER

Northstar has embarked on a tremendously exciting winemaking project with the working name of “Big Dipper.” During the just-completed 2009 harvest, winemaker David “Merf” Merfeld and our vineyard team identified special blocks of grapes within our finest vineyards. Merf and his cellar crew carefully fermented this superb fruit in tiny one-ton lots, using barrels, rather than stainless steel tanks, as fermentation vehicles. The wines will age in barrel appreciably longer than our Columbia Valley and Walla Walla merlots.

The goal of the “Big Dipper” project is to produce Washington State’s finest Merlot. We’ll make only 300 cases of this exclusive, luxury cuvee, which will bear a special name and package.

“This will be a true connoisseur’s Merlot,” Merf says, “a wine that is remarkably extracted and complex, and capable of very long-term aging.”

Although our “Big Dipper” Merlot won’t be available until its estimated release in 2012, Northstar fans can go behind the scenes to track its evolution through the commentary of award-winning writer Leslie Kelly, who will track the wine’s lifecycle from vine to glass, guided by “Merf” and our vineyard, cellar, and tasting room staff. Leslie’s “Big Dipper Chronicles” will give readers an exclusive inside look, in real time, at the creation of what we hope will become one of the world’s most coveted merlots. Leslie’s dispatches, along with videos and photos, will appear regularly at news.northstarmerlot.com, and updates will appear on Northstar’s Twitter feed (@northstarwinery) and our official Facebook page. So, keep your eyes peeled on the Big Dipper, the shining new light in Northstar’s constellation of fine wines.

EVENTS

NOVEMBER 27 - 28

THANKSGIVING WEEKEND

FRIDAY 10 - 4, SATURDAY 10 - 4, SUNDAY 11 - 4

Spend Thanksgiving in the Wine Country and taste all the current selections while enjoying live music. From 12 - 3pm Friday and Saturday, we'll be serving up German sausages hot off the grill!

DECEMBER 4, 5, & 6

WALLA WALLA HOLIDAY BARREL TASTING WEEKEND

FRIDAY 10 - 4, SATURDAY 10 - 4, SUNDAY 11 - 4

LIVE MUSIC SATURDAY & SUNDAY

A chance to really experience the holidays in Walla Walla. Talk to our winemakers while tasting future releases directly from the barrel. Taste through a world of cheese and meet our cheese expert.



NORTHSTAR

GIVE THE GIFT OF CLUB

There's no greater gift that one wine lover can give to another than membership in the Northstar Wine Club. Members enjoy invitations to member-only events; concierge services; and the opportunity to reserve private tastings at Northstar with members of the winery staff; 30% discounts on re-orders of club selections; 20% off full case purchases and 10% off half-cases. How can you resist? To order, go to northstarmerlot.com or call our Concierge at 1-800-391-1409.

OFFERINGS



NORTHSTAR WINE BASKETS

A Northstar Wine Basket is the perfect answer for that hard to buy for friend or relative and a most appreciated gift for employees, vendors and clients. Choose from three pre-made baskets, or contact Jan at the winery to create custom baskets.

A sample of the Pre-made baskets:

THE SAVORY BASKET \$85

Includes a bottle of Northstar merlot, gourmet crackers and speciality dips and tapenades, Northstar glasses and a corkscrew.

THE CHOCOLATE BASKET \$90

Includes a bottle of Northstar merlot, 2 types of gourmet chocolates that pair perfectly with our wine, 2 Northstar glasses and a corkscrew.

THE "WINE TOOLS" BASKET \$100

Includes a bottle of Northstar Merlot, Venturi aerator, Boomerang™ corkscrew, 2 Northstar glasses, Wine Wipes, Wine Away and a Star Stopper.

The perfect holiday gift for all your wine loving friends. Call today and order yours. (866) 486-7828