

# Road Less Traveled

2017 | HORSE HEAVEN HILLS



100% Cabernet Franc  
65% Wallula Vineyard  
(clones 214 and 327)  
35% Champoux Vineyard

## TECHNICAL INFORMATION

pH: 3.76

TA: 5.38 g/liter

RS: <0.1 g/liter

14.3% alc. by vol.

400 cases produced

## Harvest and Winemaking

"Two roads diverged in a woods and I - I took the road less traveled by and that has made all the difference." Robert Frost

2017 was a return to a normal vintage from the very warm vintages of 2013-2016. The Summer and Fall was very pleasant in Washington with typical warm days and cool nights. Washington's climate is remarkable for the consistent and excellent vintages.

We asked Bill DenHoed and Dan Nicholas of Wallula Vineyard to plant Cabernet Franc for us in 2014. The site is a moderately warm site with 10 feet of Silt Loam soil over fractured basalt rocks. Two acres of Cabernet Franc, one clone 214 and the other clone 327, were planted. The rows slope down to a cliff above the Columbia River. Both Wallula Cabernet Franc clones were hand picked on September 28, 2017. (Clone 214 2.0 tons, 25.5 brix, 3.52 pH, 5.1 g/l TA; Clone 327 2.26 tons, 24.8 brix, 3.49 pH, 5.1 g/l TA).

Dan Nicholas also manages the famous Champoux Vineyard and we picked 1.65 tons of Cabernet Franc on October 2, 2017 (23.8 brix, pH 3.66, 5.4 g/l TA). Champoux Cabernet Franc was planted in 1997 in shallow sandy soils. Wallula Cabernet Franc is dark and powerful with blue fruit notes while Champoux is lighter and more elegant with red fruit and herbaceous flavors.

All the grapes were destemmed and hand sorted followed by 14 to 17 day fermentation by yeasts native to the respective vineyards. The wines finished fermentation in barrel and were aged in 25% new light toasted French Oak barrels (300 L size) for 16 months before bottling.

## Tasting

Fragrant aromas of blackberry, black cherry, dried sage, tobacco, and gravel, with savory hints of leather, nutmeg, and allspice. The mouthfeel is fresh and firm with dark fruit flavors of berries and cherries and dry gravelly tannins. Very much a ripe European style of Cabernet Franc.

## Thoughts on Cabernet Franc

Cabernet Franc is an ancient grape, found in the Basque region of France and found its way North to Bordeaux where it plays a blending role South of Gironde and a larger role in the North of Bordeaux. Apocryphally, Cardinal Richelieu transported vine cuttings to the Loire Valley. In Washington, Cabernet Franc was planted in cooler areas because the vine is very winter hardy. Gaining interest among consumers, Cabernet Franc plantings are spreading to warmer areas and given more attention by winemakers and farmers.

Franc leans more herbal in aromas and flavors than other Bordeaux varieties. The tannins tend to be less aggressive than Cabernet Sauvignon or Merlot. The Road Less Traveled has an increasing quantity of Clone 214 Franc which leans less herbal and more blue fruits and sea salt flavors. We use Franc in the Children's Reserve and Batchelor's Button Cabernet Sauvignon to add elements of perfume and to balance tannins. By itself, Cabernet Franc pairs very well with grilled pork chops, barbecue, turkey, and root vegetables. Keep in mind to match the herbs you use to season the dish with the herbal flavors in the Road Less Traveled.

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Isenhower Cellars | 3471 Pranger Road | Walla Walla, Washington 99362

[www.isenhowercellars.com](http://www.isenhowercellars.com)

[info@isenhowercellars.com](mailto:info@isenhowercellars.com)