

Wild Thyme

2017 | COLUMBIA VALLEY



53% Merlot
33% Cabernet Sauvignon
7% Petit Verdot
7% Cabernet Franc

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

pH: 3.70

TA: 5.4 g/liter

RS: <0.5 g/liter

14.1% alc.

376 cases produced

*"I know a bank where the wild
thyme blows, where oxlips and the
nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious
woodbine, with sweet musk-roses
and with eglantine."*

Wm. Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream

Harvest and Winemaking

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.

Wild Thyme is a Merlot majority Bordeaux style red blend. To the Merlot we blended Cabernet Sauvignon to lengthen and increase the power of the tannins, Petit Verdot to increase the color and intensity of aromas, and Cabernet Franc to heighten the aromas and tie the wine together.

Wallula Merlot block 20 was planted in 1997 on a high elevation slope above the Columbia River originally for Ste. Michelle. Les Collines and Summit View Cabernet Sauvignon are located in Walla Walla. Dionysus Petit Verdot is planted along the Columbia River north of Pasco, WA. Dineen Cabernet Franc is located in the Rattlesnake Hills, north of Zillah, WA.

53% Wallula Vineyard Merlot, harvest 9.28.17 (24.3 brix, pH 3.7, TA 5.85 g/l).

20% Summit View Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, harvest 10.12.17, (26.8 brix, 3.77 pH, 6.15 g/l TA)

13% Les Collines Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon, harvest 10.25.17, (24.8 brix, 3.59 pH, 4.86 g/l TA)

7% Dionysus Vineyard Petit Verdot, harvest 9.25.17 (26.3 brix, 3.34 pH, 6.0 g/l TA)

7% Dineen Vineyard Cabernet Franc, 9.26.17 (23.4 brix, 3.53 pH, 4.6 g/l TA).

Tasting

Attractive aromas of black cherry and plums, pomegranate, raspberry, dried tarragon, and cocoa.

The mouthfeel is lively with bright acidity and rich with copious fruit flavors of cherry, raspberry, plum, with a hint of dried herbs appropriate for the style of wine. The finish is long and tingles with pleasing acidity.

Thoughts on Merlot and Bordeaux Blends

I am a believer in Merlot from Washington with a bias towards blending Merlot rather than making a varietal wine from it. Merlot is an early ripening grape and performs best in goldilocks vineyards. In hot years from warm sites, Merlot can ripen too fast and not be in balance.

Wallula Merlot is the basis of the Wild Thyme because it is a higher elevation site that ripens Merlot at an even pace. The brix, acidity, and tannins are all in balance at harvest. Wallula Merlot is softer than other vineyards' therefore I blend in a generous amount of Cabernet Sauvignon to achieve length in the wine. Petit Verdot and Cabernet Franc are like finishing seasonings for the wine.

Many of my compatriots add Syrah to their Bordeaux blends. I understand their reasons, Syrah makes the blend darker color, softer, fruity, and smoother. Syrah is not traditional in Bordeaux and seems "wrong" to me. I suspect many winemakers started blending Syrah with Bordeaux varieties because they have too much Syrah. That is my story and I am sticking to it.

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