

Wild Thyme

2020 | HORSE HEAVEN HILLS



51% Merlot
37% Cabernet Sauvignon
6% Petit Verdot
6% Cabernet Franc

TECHNICAL INFORMATION

pH: 3.55

Titrateable Acidity: 5.6 g/liter

Volatile Acidity: 0.5 g/liter

Residual Sugar: <0.1 g/liter

Alcohol: 14.2%

290 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."*
William Shakespeare, A Midsummer Night's Dream

Harvest and Winemaking

2020 is one of the best vintages of recent years. Winter snow and early spring rain provided enough soil moisture to help the vines grow after bud break. Summer was warm and dry, resulting in small and intensely flavored berries. Ten days of smoke from the Willamette Valley and California hung over the Western United States during mid-September. We tested all our wines and found zero to minimal impact from smoke.

The purpose of a Bordeaux blend is to create a wine better than the sum of its parts. A personal goal is to make a blend exclusively from a single vineyard. The 2020 Wild Thyme accomplishes both goals.

Wallula is a visually stunning vineyard perched on benches and hillsides above the Columbia River. The soil is silt-loam. The wind off the river cools the vines in the afternoon. The variety of vine clones at Wallula increases the complexity of the Wild Thyme. The Merlot is clone 15. The Cabernet Sauvignon is a blend of clone 33 and clone 412. The Cabernet Franc is clone 214 and the Petit Verdot is clone 2. All the grapes were hand-picked, destemmed, and fermented with yeasts specific for each variety. The wines were aged separately for 8 months,

blended, and returned to the barrels for 14 months. The Wild Thyme was aged in 100% French Oak 300-liter barrels (17% new) and bottled unfiltered and unfiltered.

Tasting Notes

The Wild Thyme has a dark red hue with aromas of blackberries, spiced black plums, cedar, dust, mineral, violet, and old rose. It has flavors of blackberry, currant, sweet tobacco, and herbs de provence. Mouthfeel is broadly textured and rich with a lengthy finish. Delicious!

Thoughts on Merlot and Bordeaux Blends

I prefer crafting a Bordeaux blend based on Merlot rather than making a varietal Merlot. It is an early-ripening grape and performs best in slower-ripening vineyards. Hot years cause Merlot grapes to ripen too fast and not be in balance.

Wallula Merlot is the base of the Wild Thyme. Wallula is a slow-ripening vineyard that ripens Merlot at an even pace. Clone 15 Merlot has softer tannins than other clones. We blend in a generous amount of Cabernet Sauvignon for length on the finish. Petit Verdot adds color, structure, and aromas. Cabernet Franc adds lovely floral aromas.

Ingredients

Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Petit Verdot, and Cabernet Franc grapes, yeast, tartaric acid, 35 mg/l of Free SO₂ at bottling.



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