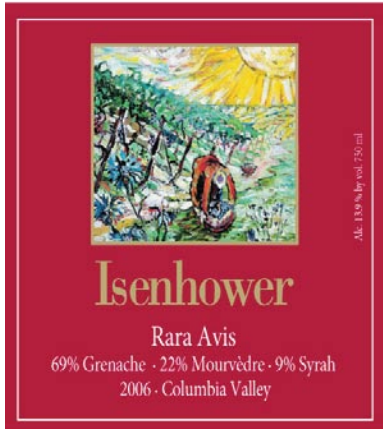




TASTING NOTES



Thumbnail Notes

Intensity: medium

Fruit: raspberry, cherry, strawberry

Spice: earth, wet stones, smoke

Oak: low

Tannins: medium

Enjoyment: now to 2012

Pairing: stew and chili, spice rubbed meats, grilled pork chops

2006 Columbia Valley Rara Avis

69% Grenache 22% Mourvedre 9% Syrah

I started enjoying wine while a graduate student at the University of Colorado. The first wines to cross my palette were sweet German Rieslings. I quickly moved on to red wines and those from the Southern Rhone sang to me.

Washington State is not known for wines made from funny sounding grapes like Grenache or Mourvedre. These grapes require a very long growing season to ripen and both are very sensitive to winter cold injury. In the winter of 1996, Columbia Crest lost 62 acres of Grenache.

Since starting to make wine in 1999 I've dreamed about making a Southern Rhone style. I was lucky to pick up the contract for 2.5 acres of Grenache, planted in 1996, at Elerding Vineyard in Mabton. The Mourvedre was planted in 2003 at Elerding Vineyard in Alderdale and the Syrah portion was planted in 2000 in Alderdale. The Mabton vineyard is a warmer site but the Alderdale vineyard has a longer growing season.

Rara Avis: 1) A rare thing or person. 2) A rare bird. I named this wine Rara Avis to celebrate the scarcity of Grenache and Mourvedre in Washington.

Tasting and Pairing

Together the Grenache and Mourvedre create a medium weight wine with flavors of cherry, raspberry, and strawberry. The aroma is the show-stopper; it is sultry and seductive like a 1940's Hollywood actress. To slightly increase the weight of the finish I blended in one barrel of Phelps clone Syrah.

Recommended enjoyment period is now through 2012 leaning towards 2010 to 2012 for optimal drinking. Pair the Rara Avis with stews, chili, dry spice rubbed meats, grilled pork chops, and anything with copious olive oil.

"Our goals are to emphasize the character of the vineyards and make wine that reflects how it is supposed to taste. These goals are reached by our attention to every detail, from soil to bottle."

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