



2001 *51% Merlot & 49% Cabernet Franc*  
COLUMBIA VALLEY

Caleb Foster and Nina Buty Foster are pleased to introduce our Columbia Valley red blend of cabernet franc and merlot. The cabernet franc was planted in Champoux Vineyard in 1997. Champoux Vineyard lies above the Columbia River on Phinny Hill, close enough for the river/lake effect to help mitigate freeze damage during the region's potentially harsh winters and spring cold snaps. Conversely, the merlot is grown at Conner Lee Vineyard just south of Othello, Washington, on the east side of the Wahluke Slope. Nearly a desert, the nights cool down substantially, the growing season is shorter, and the day heat ripens the clusters consistently. Planted as ungrafted vinifera in 1992, the vines reach into sandy soils, which provide excellent drainage.

The Champoux Vineyard cabernet franc was hand-harvested on October 2, 2001, at full grape maturity. The vines grew eight lbs/per per plant. The cabernet franc measured 25.0° brix, 3.65 pH, and 5.0 g/L acid as fresh fruit. The merlot was handpicked from Conner Lee Vineyard on October 3, 2001, measuring 25.5° brix, 3.65 pH, and 5.8 g/L acid as fresh fruit. The vines grew 5.25 lbs/per plant.

Open vessel fermented, hand punched down and aerated during ferment, the wines finished sugar and malolactic ferment in barrels. Aged 100% in traditional French chateau barrels, 50% new, for 15 months, the wines were blended, were egg white fined and bottled in January of 2003. At bottling, the alcohol was 14.4% and the pH 3.80.

The nose is full of Washington blueberries, dark chocolate, cedar, and elegant blended fruit complexity; with a balanced weight and texture, the merlot dominates the palate with full fruit, beetroot, and plentiful and dusty tannins. Youthful but accessible now, the intense fruit, balanced oak and tannin, will allow this wine to age ten years or more.

This wine is dedicated to the bracerros who work the vines from pruning to harvest to develop our lovely fruits.

Two hundred and four cases were bottled. The wine was released on May 1, 2003.