



2003 *52% Merlot & 48% Cabernet Franc*
COLUMBIA VALLEY

Annually we offer a vintage selected blend of cabernet franc and merlot. The merlot, planted twelve years ago, was harvested from Conner Lee Vineyard. The cabernet franc we harvested from both Champoux Vineyard and Conner Lee. Champoux Vineyard has an outstanding thirty-year history of growing Bordeaux varietals in the Horse Heaven Hills. Seventy miles north, at Conner Lee's 2000 foot elevation, the growing season is shorter than the Horse Heaven Hills. Conner Lee's strengths lie in its sandy soil and the cold spring and fall nights, which retain natural fruit acids while the hot summer heat ripens the clusters consistently.

All our fruits at Buty are hand harvested. The merlot from Conner Lee Vineyard was harvested on September 22nd measuring 25° brix hydrometer, 3.65 pH, and 8.5 g/L organic acid as fresh fruit. The Conner Lee cabernet franc we harvested on October 7th at 25° brix hydrometer, 3.55 pH, and 6.0 organic acids. At Conner Lee we grow six pounds per plant, less than two bottles per plant, and equivalent to Bordeaux First Growth per hectare harvest limits. The Champoux Vineyard cabernet franc was hand-harvested on September 22nd, at full maturity. The cabernet franc measured 25.8° brix hydrometer, 3.60 pH, and 8.0 g/L organic acid as fresh fruit. As a final blend, the alcohol is 14.6% and the pH 3.75. We aerated during ferment in opentop tanks and hand punched down. Basket pressed, the wines finished sugar and malolactic ferment in barrels. Aged entirely in traditional French Bordeaux Chateau barrels, 40% new, for 13 months, the blend was finished and eggwhite-fined prior to bottling on November 30th, 2004.

The nose is full of Washington blueberries, dark chocolate, cedar, and elegant blended complexity with a balanced weight and texture. The youthful cabernet franc dominates the palate with full fruit, beetroot, and plentiful dusty tannins. The 2003 vintage comes across like the 1994s and the 1998s did, very rich and soft while young with high pHs and low acids. Those 90's wines are drinking very well still. Our 2003s are even more concentrated with better vineyard management than the previous decade's wines from Washington. Youthful and accessible now, the intense fruit, balanced oak and tannin, will allow this wine to age ten years or more.

Three hundred sixty one cases were bottled. The wine is released March 1st each year.