



## 2008 79% *Merlot* & 21% *Cabernet Franc*

### COLUMBIA VALLEY

Annually we offer a selected blend of merlot and cabernet franc blended from Conner Lee and Champoux Vineyards. Conner Lee Vineyard's fruit is 90% of the wine offering the elegant, perfumed tones. The vines at Conner Lee are mature at 17 years old. The cabernet franc harvested from Champoux Vineyard is 11 years old. Conner Lee's sandy soils, cold spring and fall nights retain natural fruit acids, while the hot summer heat consistently ripens these fruits. Seventy miles south, Champoux Vineyard's growing season is longer in the Horse Heaven Hills offering sweet black fruit. Both vineyards' consistent high qualities are from modern, sophisticated daily management in the vineyard.

This vintage is unique because sugar and therefore alcohols were ideally aligned with acidity and overall flavors. We've been striving for the kind of balance 2008 offered us. At Conner Lee we grow four pounds per plant or one and a half bottles per plant—equivalent to Bordeaux First Growth harvest yields. All our fruits are hand harvested to begin our winemaking. Our fruit is always gravity transferred with our modern shaker tables where we hand sort and deliver whole grapes to the fermenters by gravity. These processes allow us to preserve the abundant natural aromatics. There's a nose of Northwest marionberries and violets, with a rich palate from attack to finish, with our stylistic supple texture. Rich merlot dominates the young palate and compliments the cabernet franc's grip and fragrance. Youthful and accessible now, the intense fruit, balanced oak and tannin, will allow this wine to age ten years or more.

The merlot from Conner Lee was harvested on October 1st, with the cabernet franc harvested October 10th at 23° brix hydrometer, 3.4 pH, and 8.0 organic acids. The wine was 18 days on skins, and then went directly to barrels. The Champoux Vineyard cabernet franc was picked fully mature on October 2nd measuring 25° brix hydrometer, pH 3.4, and 7.0 g/L organic acid as fresh fruit. It fermented 15 days on skins before barrel aging. As a final blend, the alcohol is 14.1%. We aerated during fermentation in open-top tanks with unique proprietary air tools, hand punched down and selected only free run wine to blend. The wine was aged in Bordeaux Chateaux barrels from select coopers with 60% of them new. The wine was bottled on January 18th, 2010.

Two hundred sixty five cases were bottled along with magnums and larger format bottles. The wine is released March 1st each year for \$40 per bottle.