



2011 *Conner Lee Vineyard*

67% MERLOT & 33% CABERNET FRANC

COLUMBIA VALLEY

Vineyard: This vintage was sourced exclusively from the sloping, sandy soils of the famed Conner Lee Vineyard. Conner Lee is a cool site in a warm, sunny region of Washington. In this eastern Washington desert, the hot summer ripens the fruit, while the diurnal temperatures keep the acids high and the pH low. Buty has bottled a blend of merlot & cabernet franc since 2000, our inaugural vintage.

Vintage & Harvest: Experience gained from the cool 2010 vintage proved invaluable in the even cooler 2011 vintage. In the vineyard, we did extensive pruning and fruit drops to further limit an already small crop. This allowed the vines to focus on ripening the remaining grapes. As a result, we saw some of our smallest yields ever, but achieved full ripeness and the elimination of all green character. Merlot was harvested on October 24th, with cabernet franc coming in on October 27th.

Winemaking: We hand-sorted and destemmed with gravity transfer to tank, which allowed us to preserve the fruit's abundant aromatics. We aerated during fermentation in wood tanks for two weeks and selected only free-run wine to blend. The wines were aged 15 months in Taransaud and Bel Air French Château barrels, one-third of which were new, with minimal racking. The final wine was blended just prior to bottling in January 2013, with an alcohol of 13.9%.

Tasting Notes: While the majority of this blend is merlot, the intensity of the cabernet franc in 2011 is amazing. Not only does it add a vivid floral component to the wine, but it brings a rare blueberry note that underscores the dark berry and jam aromas of the merlot. New oak aging for select lots contributes citrus and cinnamon spice layers, with cool vintage acidity adding poise and precision. The mid-palate is juicy and rich, with plush tannins that lead to a long, sophisticated finish, with hints of blackberry, brioche and spice.

Two hundred eighty-two cases were bottled including half bottles, magnums and large-format bottles. This wine is released on March 1st, and retails for \$45.