

BEAST

2012 Sphinx Riesling Wallula Vineyard

Nature of the BEAST

The mercurial nature of our BEAST wines allows us the freedom to explore new varietals, new vineyards and new blends beyond the classic Buty portfolio. Made with a clear vision and voice, these wines have developed their own faithful following. Our Wildebeest and Sphinx are available nationally in fine restaurants and wine shops.

Lair of the BEAST

Our 2012 BEAST Sphinx Riesling comes from the wilds of Wallula Vineyard, nestled high above the Columbia River. From the river's edge, the property climbs to a peak elevation of almost 1,400 feet. The domain of our Sphinx Riesling is a special biodynamic-certified block in the high reaches of Wallula, where the Missoula floods deposited silt loam soils. Just as sandy soils and a great river have shaped the original Sphinx, our Sphinx Riesling is dramatically affected by the Columbia River, which snakes around Wallula with the water acting as a massive insulator during the day, and providing a cooling effect once the sun goes down.

Season of the BEAST

Across the board, 2012 was a great vintage, showing exactly what we look for in each vineyard and varietal. Spring was temperate with almost all of the rain falling in May and June. July and August were dry, with perfect weather and no extreme heat events. Because Wallula is a very cool vineyard, we were able to achieve phenomenal hangtime, while still preserving beautiful natural acidity. We harvested our riesling on November 5, at 21° Brix, 3.35 pH and a TA of 0.8.

Winemaking

Two-thirds of the grapes for our 2012 Sphinx Riesling were handled as whole clusters to preserve their bright, energetic character, with the other third crushed on skin contact to add weight and intensity. To enhance complexity, 60% of the wine was fermented in stainless steel using native yeast, with the other 40% fermented in neutral French oak using an Austrian yeast selection. The final wine is bone dry with 1.2 g/L of residual sugar, and an alcohol content of 12.2%.

Notes Upon Encountering the Sphinx

Though this Sphinx is as pure and dry as a cool desert night, beneath its timeless reserve is an oasis of flavors. On the nose, layers of luscious peach, orange blossom and honeysuckle are supported by hints of green apple and spice. The floral and citrus notes continue on the palate, where the flavors are accentuated by lively acidity and a streak of sophisticated minerality.