



## 2014 *Conner Lee Vineyard*

CHARDONNAY

COLUMBIA VALLEY

**Vineyard:** We have made a vineyard-designate Conner Lee Vineyard Chardonnay since our debut 2000 vintage. Originally planted in the early 1980s, this acclaimed vineyard is located at an elevation of approximately 2,000 feet on the plateau of Radar Hill south of Othello, Washington. It is a cool site in a warm, sunny region. In our Eastern Washington desert environment, the spring and fall nights can be 50 degrees cooler than the daytime temperatures. The hot summer months of July and August ripen the fruit, while cooler fall temperatures keep the acids high and the pH low. We work with Conner Lee's prized 1989 block and 2005 'clone #95' block. Both are planted with ungrafted vines in well-drained sandy-silt soils. To achieve the clean and complex style this wine is known for, we prune for optimum fruit positions in February, shoot thin in May and cluster thin at veraison—all to promote concentration in the fruit early in the year.

**Vintage & Harvest:** 2014 delivered abundant spring heat, leading to early budbreak and flowering. To address the heat, which continued through summer, we tailored our irrigation, crop size and shading to the needs of each vineyard. In the run up to harvest, Mother Nature delivered ideal temperate weather, which allowed us to pick exactly when we wished. One of our earliest harvests ever, we picked our 1989 block chardonnay starting on September 4th at 22.5 Brix and 3.3 pH, with our clone #95 grapes arriving on September 19th at 22.2 and 3.7 pH.

**Winemaking:** This wine was 100% whole-cluster pressed. 85% was fermented in predominantly mature Burgundy barrels, with a total of 13% new French oak. To enhance texture and richness, we fermented 15% in concrete. To maintain Conner Lee's bright, fresh character, only 40% of the wine went through malolactic fermentation. In keeping with our gentle winemaking approach, and a belief in preserving nuance and complexity, this wine was not cold stabilized. As a result, if stored exceedingly cold, it may shed natural tartaric crystals.

**Tasting Notes:** The 2014 vintage has yielded a lush and silky wine, with beautiful floral aromatics, pure vivid fruit and lovely minerality. The nose offers layers of apricot, golden apples, clover and a hint of beeswax. On the palate, excellent natural acidity and a note of lemon pie tartness add poise and length, underscoring flavors of creamy citrus, toasty spice and honeysuckle. This is an elegantly balanced wine that displays equal measures of power and grace. Alcohol 14.2%.

Three hundred and eighty cases were produced. Released September 1, 2015. Retail for \$42.