



2003 Syrah
Ciel du Cheval Vineyard
Red Mountain

Composition:	100% Syrah
Harvest:	Sept. 5-6, 2003
Alcohol:	14.8%
pH:	3.73
Titrateable Acid:	5.9 gm/litre
Bottling:	February 5, 2005
	197 cases

2003 was another very warm vintage in Washington. July and August were hot, and we anticipated an early harvest. Fortunately the weather cooled in mid-September, allowing more hang time. Wines from this vintage are lush and fruit-forward with great fruit intensity, tannins and excellent acidity.

At Ciel du Cheval the cane-pruned vines handled a modest crop at 2.5 — 3.1 tons per acre, the ten-year-old roots now working into the alluvial gravel below the shallow sandy soil. This fruit came in earlier than in past years, achieving physiological maturity before the autumn weather cooled.

The grapes were de-stemmed, gently crushed, then fermented in 1¼-ton stainless tanks and ¾-ton Macrobins after several days of cold soak, with Rhône valley-isolate yeasts. The wine was dejuiced through large stainless steel strainers and gently transferred to French oak barrels, approximately 25% new. This process, rather than hard-pressing, gives us exceptionally focused, high-quality wine low in phenolic solids. It was bottled after sixteen months in barrel.

Washington's Rhône varietal pioneer, Doug McCrea transforms grapes from the finest Columbia Valley vineyards into wines of extraordinary depth, balance, complexity and finesse. Annual Production: 4000 cases of Syrah, Viognier, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Roussanne and Counoise.

93 points - Wine Enthusiast - Editor's Choice "This pure Syrah from a great Red Mountain vineyard is a classic in every respect. Deep, succulent black fruits are underscored by tart acid, bone-dry tannins and the vineyard's typical mineral streak. Hints of pepper are sprinkled throughout, and the tight, concentrated layering promises good aging potential."

93 points - Wine & Spirits "This is the first of many syrahs recommended here that leaves little doubt that **Doug McCrea is making some of the best in Washington.** Give it a few minutes in the glass and it opens into the scents of a spice drawer. Its black cherry flavors are fresh and vibrant, dusted with white pepper, which gives the wine great length. There's no mistaking its Red Mountain provenance, and yet it remains fresh and light. For rack of lamb."

Top 100 Wines of 2006 - San Francisco Chronicle "McCrea is Washington state's most accomplished Rhône Ranger, and here is further proof. This Syrah has an intense, juicy berry character that contrasts nicely with its savory streak of pepper. It's bright and lively, with oak used more for texture and spice than toasty aroma and flavor. Jazzy, berry-ish acidity marks the finish."

Winner, 2006 Syrah Shoot-Out - Hospice du Rhône, Paso Robles, California