



2005 Syrah
Ciel du Cheval Vineyard
Red Mountain

Composition:	100% Syrah
Harvest:	Sept. 19 & 27, 2005
Alcohol:	14.8%
pH:	3.75
Titrateable Acid:	6.4 gm/litre
Bottling:	February 28, 2007 298 cases

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

The 2005 vintage was a perfect combination of a frost-free spring, an even, warm summer, and a protracted 'Indian summer' – virtually ideal conditions for excellent wine grapes. The extra hang time produced mature, concentrated flavors and the season's ideal weather resulted in small berry size. 2005 will stand as one of the most outstanding vintages in the industry's history.

At Ciel du Cheval on Red Mountain, the fan trellised, cane-pruned vines with ten-year-old roots are now working into the alluvial gravel below the shallow sandy soil. One of the hottest sites in Washington makes this fruit always the first we harvest. The heat produces small berries with thicker skins, resulting in deep extraction. Two different clones yielded 2.5 & 3.7 tons per acre, which for this trellising is a light crop level. Since we began bottling two single vineyard Syrahs in 1997 - a wonderful contrast we liken to "black and blue" - Ciel has consistently produced a wine classically Southern Rhône in character, with stronger tannins. It has aromas of licorice, black pepper, and spice followed by dense flavors of black cherry, tar, chocolate, anise, tobacco, black truffle, Coca-Cola™... ..hence the "black" of the duo. It finishes with good acid, presaging its excellent cellaring potential. We expect this wine to drink well for ten to twenty years.

Harvested at 23.8° to 26.2° Brix, the grapes were de-stemmed, gently crushed, then fermented in small open-top fermenters after several days of cold soak, with Rhône valley-isolate yeasts. Caps were manually punched down two or three times per day during active fermentation. When dry, the wine was dejuiced through large stainless steel strainers and gently transferred to French oak barrels, approximately 22% new. This process, rather than hard-pressing, gives us exceptionally focused, high-quality wine low in phenolic solids. It was bottled after seventeen 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: 3500 cases of Syrah, Viognier, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Roussanne and Counoise.

91 pts. Wine Enthusiast "Small berries with thick skins give this wine concentration and tannin, making some extra time in bottle mandatory. It's still tight, and the layers of graphite and earth complement without concealing the lighter floral aromas and pretty, wild berry fruit. It rolls into a complex finish with black fruits, cola, licorice and baking chocolate, all lightly applied and in perfect proportion."

91 pts. Wine & Spirits Magazine "This is all dark scents at first - mocha, anise and plum - until a spiced caramel note emerges with air. The flavors remain plummy and dark, pleasingly vinous, finishing with black pepper spice. A good accompaniment for lamb."

WASHINGTON STATE'S PREMIER RHÔNE VARIETAL WINERY

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