



2006 Syrah
Ciel du Cheval Vineyard
Red Mountain

Composition:	100% Syrah
Harvest:	Sept. 9, 11 & 28, 2006
Alcohol:	14.8%
pH:	3.88
Titratable Acid:	5.4 gm/litre
Bottling:	March 19, 2008 389 cases

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

2006 was a very warm year overall, one of the top three or four in the past ten years. It began with a cool and wet spring that gave way to a long, rather hot summer, resulting in early sugar maturation. Early fall brought cooler weather towards mid-September, helping to extend hang time and sustain good acidity. The sugar to pH ratio was in a fairly typical range, but acids were somewhat higher. Overall, the red wines have good color and depth while the whites are displaying intense fruit flavors. The vintage promises to be very good.

At Ciel du Cheval on Red Mountain, the fan trellised, cane-pruned vines with twelve-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 were used. They yielded 4.2 & 4.8 tons per acre, which for this trellising is a modest 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 great acidity, presaging its excellent cellaring potential. We expect this wine to drink well for ten to twenty years.

Harvested at 24.6° and 25.6° 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 Yakima Valley and Red Mountain vineyards into wines of extraordinary depth, balance, complexity and finesse. Annual Production: 3500 cases of Syrah, Viognier, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Roussanne, Grenache Blanc, Picpoul, Cinsault, Marsanne and Counoise.

93 pts – Wine Enthusiast – Editor's Choice

Washington State's Premier Rhône Varietal Winery

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