



2009 Counoise
Ciel du Cheval Vineyard
Red Mountain

Composition:	80% Counoise 20% Syrah
Vineyard:	Ciel du Cheval
Alcohol:	14.8%
pH:	3.82
Titrateable Acid:	5.5 g/l
Bottling:	March 28, 2013 120 cases

WINEMAKER'S NOTES

This is one of only a few bottlings of this varietal in the world. The cuttings are Beaucastel material sourced from Tablas Creek Nursery, planted for us in 1999 by Jim Holmes at his renowned Ciel du Cheval Vineyard on Red Mountain. Our primary use of these grapes is in our southern-Rhône style blend ("Sirocco"), but we are so enchanted by the Counoise that we like to bottle a small amount varietally. We normally blend in some Syrah to balance the mid-palate.

Counoise ("coon-WAHZ") is renowned for its brightness, light tannins and explosion of red fruit aromas and flavors. Deep and intense, the 2009 exemplifies this "in spades." It will be great with any foods where you might want a Pinot Noir.

What a difference a year makes! 2008 was one of the coolest growing seasons and 2009 virtually the opposite. A cool, moist spring delayed bloom but by mid-June we were progressing at a typical pace. July and August were two of the hottest back-to-back months in recent history. The sugars accelerated, ahead of grape maturity. In September, despite high sugars, we had to wait for the proper flavors to develop. On October 10th an unprecedented early cold snap, "toasted" the vines' leaves and rendering them frozen in time. There was no choice but to harvest everything as fast as possible. The winery was packed to capacity with red fermenters and barrels of fermenting whites.

In retrospect, the vintage was a very good one for Washington State in spite of the record heat. The reds are being hailed for their great color depth and maturity. The white wines should be fairly opulent, as the skins developed a great deal of "bronzing" from the intense heat and extended exposure. This vintage is an expression of the very ripest fruit!

A pioneer of Rhône varietals in Washington State, Winemaker Doug McCrea transforms grapes from the finest Yakima Valley, Red Mountain and Columbia Valley vineyards into wines of extraordinary depth, balance, complexity and finesse. Annual Production: 3000 cases of Syrah, Viognier, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Roussanne, Marsanne, Grenache Blanc, Picpoul, Cinsault and Counoise.

Washington State's Premier Rhône Varietal Winery

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