



## 2009 Syrah, Cuvée Orleans Yakima Valley

Composition:	94% Syrah 6% Viognier
Vineyards:	Boushey Grande Côte Vineyard Elephant Mountain Vineyard Sugarloaf Vineyard Ciel du Cheval, Red Mountain
Harvest:	9/11 – 10/15/2009
Alcohol:	14.8%
pH:	3.65
Titrateable Acid:	5.6 gm/litre
Bottling:	February 7, 2013 — 221 cases

### WINEMAKER'S NOTES

Cuvée Orleans is our most exclusive bottling, drawn from our very best Syrah barrels in a tribute to Doug's birthplace, New Orleans. The fruit is sourced from Washington's finest Syrah vineyards, boasting some of the oldest Syrah plantings in the state. The addition of some Viognier to the Syrah fermenters, in the tradition of wines from Côte Rôtie, produces four distinct and often dramatic outcomes: during co-fermentation the white grape enzymes extract even more color (somewhat counterintuitive); the Viognier adds floral aromatics; the acidity is increased, which adds finish on the palate and longevity in the cellar; and most significantly the white wine dissolves and integrates the tannins, allowing the fruit to express and leading to a silky and more seductive wine. We expect this wine will cellar well for ten to twenty years.

At harvest, the grapes were gently crushed, then fermented in small lots following several days of cold soak, on a variety of yeast strains isolated from the Rhône valley. 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 10% new. This process, rather than hard-pressing, results in exceptionally focused, high-quality wine low in phenolic solids. This wine was aged thirty-three months in 2- to 6-year old French oak barrels.

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 other physiological aspects. In September, despite high sugars, we had to wait for the proper flavors to develop. By October 10th we had only harvested half the total crop, but that Saturday night brought an unprecedented early cold snap, "toasting" the vines' leaves and rendering them, in a sense, "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 varieties in Washington State, winemaker Doug McCrea transforms grapes from the finest Yakima Valley and Red Mountain vineyards into wines of extraordinary depth, balance, complexity and finesse. Annual Production: 2800 cases of Syrah, Viognier, Grenache, Mourvèdre, Roussanne, and Counoise.