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2006 Ciel du Cheval Vineyard Cabernet Sauvignon

VINTAGE

The 2006 vintage was quite warm with overall heat accumulation rivaling the high numbers posted in 2003. While spring was a little rainier than usual, July and August were hot prompting concern that the grapes might ripen before the flavors had time to fully develop, but a perfect Indian summer slowed ripening just enough to give the grapes extra time of the vine to soften the tannins and produce mature, richly flavored grapes.

VINEYARDS

One characteristic contributing to the great success of the Ciel du Cheval vineyard is the high pH found in the loam topsoil of Red Mountain, courtesy of the calcium carbonate deposits left by the ancient Spokane floods. Temperatures in the Ciel du Cheval vineyard rarely reach above 100°F which is ideal for vine development and fruit ripening. In fact, with 3,000 “degree days” per growing season and 2 more hours of sunlight per day than the Napa region, owner Jim Holmes is able to grow grapes with great concentration and balance.

WINEMAKING

After destemming and crushing, grapes were fermented on their skins for eight days. After being pressed off, this lot was aged for 21 months in all new French Oak barrels to improve its already lengthy finish. Racking the wine every three months created pliant tannins and bold, stylish structure.

TASTING NOTES

The Columbia Valley is wonderfully suited to ripen Cabernet Sauvignon, and Ciel du Cheval Vineyard on Red Mountain gets it right every year. Full of blackberry and dark plum fruit, it is seamlessly balanced, with a long, concentrated finish. The *Wine Advocate* rated the 2005 vintage of this wine 92+ pts and the *Wine Spectator* rated it 92 pts.



ANALYSIS AT BOTTLING

Total Acidity0.52g/100ml
 pH.....3.71
 Blend..... 94% Ciel du Cheval
 Cabernet Sauvignon; 4% Merlot; 2%
 Cabernet Franc
 Cases.....148
 Bottling Date..... June 18, 2008

Mike Januik, owner/winemaker