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2006 Columbia Valley Merlot

VINTAGE

The 2006 growing season 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 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 on the vine to soften the tannins and produce mature, richly flavored grapes.

VINEYARDS

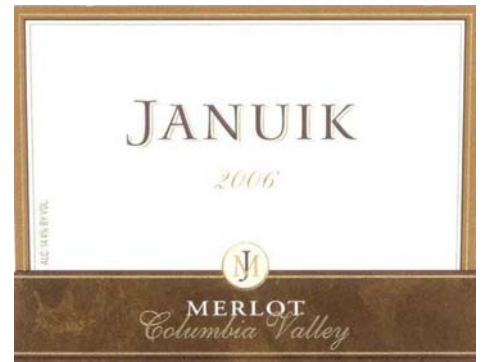
One of the advantages of having made wine in the Columbia Valley since the mid-1980s is the opportunity it's given me to work with some of the most dedicated growers in the industry. Our Columbia Valley wines are made from a short list of vineyards I consider to be among the best in the state. The diversity of these vineyards – representing many of the most mature, carefully managed sites in Washington – provides for a full range of fruit expression that allows me to craft complex, multi-layered wines true to Columbia Valley *terroir* as well as the varietal character of the grapes. Our 2004 Columbia Valley Merlot includes grapes from Ciel du Cheval, Conner Lee, Klipsun and Weinbau Vineyards.

WINEMAKING

After destemming and crushing, grapes were fermented in small lots for an average time of eight days. After being pressed off, each lot of wine was moved to predominately new French oak barrels for 18 months of barrel aging during which time the wine was racked every 3-4 months.

TASTING NOTES

This well-structured, medium-bodied Merlot shows lots of raspberry, vanilla and spice notes in the nose that complement rich black fruit and cocoa flavors in the mouth. Generous in texture and length, it should continue to improve with age for the next 5-10 years.



ANALYSIS AT BOTTLING

Total Acidity	0.54g/100ml
pH.....	3.72
Blend....	97% Merlot 3% Cabernet Sauvignon
Cases.....	1238
Bottling Date.....	June 11, 2008

Mike Januik, owner/winemaker