

# L'Ecole No 41

## 2006 Pepper Bridge Vineyard Apogee Walla Walla Valley Appellation

**Released:** December 2008

**Variety:** 46% Cabernet Sauvignon, 42% Merlot, 8% Malbec, 4% Cabernet Franc

**Vineyard:** Pepper Bridge Vineyard

This vineyard, planted in the terraced remnants of ice-age flood deposits, is one of the Walla Walla Valley's most reputable vineyards. Apogee was the first wine produced from this vineyard and shows its characteristic spicy, bold and dark fruit flavors with a rich structure, well-integrated tannins and a long finish.

**Proprietary**

**Name:** **Apogee** is the point in the orbit of the moon that is the greatest distance from the earth; the farthest point or apex. This name reflects all that we were trying to accomplish with the wine, reaching the ultimate in quality.

**Harvest:** A cool spring, followed by a cool fruit set in June set the stage for lower yields than normal in 2006. Light crops tend to get lighter, and an abundance of sunshine and heat units in July resulted in small berry size and cluster weights. A mild August helped extend the late season ripening period into September and October. The overall season crop load was lower than normal, at 2 ½ tons per acre. Our traditional cool long harvest with no rainfall resulted in fabulous fruit quality, with bright clean aromatics and acidity in the whites and vibrant extraction and rich color in the red wines.

**Technical:** Cabernet Sauvignon – Oct. 10-13, 2006; 24.9% Brix, 3.48 pH, 0.61 g/100ml  
Merlot – Sept. 12-25, 2006, 25.3% Brix, 3.46 pH, 0.54 g/100ml acidity  
Malbec – Sept. 29, 2006, 24.8% Brix, 3.39 pH, 0.56 g/100ml  
Cabernet Franc – Oct 18, 2006, 25.6% Brix, 3.49 pH, 0.54 g/100ml acidity

Bottled 1,748 cases July 14<sup>th</sup>, 2008; 3.75 pH, acid 0.64 g/100ml, 14.3% alcohol by volume, <0.2% residual sugar:

**Description:** *Boldly aromatic, this wine has spicy aromas of cinnamon and nutmeg, earthy hints of sweet tobacco and leather, and smoky dark fruit packed with chocolate, mint and cherry finish.*

**Vinification:** The handpicked grapes were gently crushed and de-stemmed into small, one-ton stainless steel fermenters. The must was fermented with Pasteur Red and Cepage Cabernet yeast and gently punched down by hand two to three times daily. At the ideal balance of tannin and fruit extraction, the must was gently pressed and transferred to tank to settle. The resulting wine was aged 22 months in 100% small oak barrels with approximately 50% new oak. The wine was racked five times, then bottled unfinned and lightly filtered to preserve its natural flavors.