

L'Ecole N° 41

2005 Seven Hills Vineyard Estate Merlot Walla Walla Valley Appellation

Released: May 2007

Variety: 82% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Sauvignon, 6% Cabernet Franc

Vineyard: Seven Hills Vineyard

L'Ecole N° 41 is a partner in the 220 acre Seven Hills Vineyard, along with Pepper Bridge Winery and Leonetti Cellar.

Winemaker

Comment: "With mature vines, this consistently rich and flavorful Merlot from our Estate Seven Hills Vineyard shows elegance and finesse, yet wonderful complexity and length on the finish."

Harvest: The cool 2005 Spring provided perfect conditions for balanced tissue regeneration and canopy growth on the heels of the hard 2004 Winter. Additional thinning efforts were required to balance cluster development and fruit uniformity after a cooler fruit set in June. Normal summer sunshine and heat units led to an awesome late season ripening period, with intense sunshine and little or no rain. The overall season crop load was lower than normal, at 2 ½ to 3 tons per acre. Our traditional cool long harvest 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: With a slightly cooler fall, harvest commenced the third week in September for the Merlot, followed quickly by the Cabernet Franc. Cabernet Sauvignon was harvested beginning the second week in October. Average Merlot ripeness was 25.1% Brix 3.60 pH, and 0.50 grams/100 ml acidity.

Bottled 1,411 cases February 22, 2007; pH 3.63, acid 0.66 g/100ml, 14.4% alcohol by volume, <0.2% residual sugar

Description: *Our Estate Seven Hills Vineyard Merlot shows its characteristic cedary, silky black cherry fruit, with cool mint and baking spice aromas and a gripping, yet elegant mix of blueberry, blackberry and cocoa on a long lingering finish.*

Vinification: Each lot was hand harvested ripe and gently crushed into one-ton stainless steel fermenters. The must was inoculated with yeast and punched down by hand during fermentation to maximize fruit extraction. When fermentation was complete or we were otherwise satisfied with the level of tannin and flavor extract, the must was gravity fed into press. After a gentle pressing, the wine was racked to tank and allowed to settle. The wine was then racked to 100% small oak barrels, with approximately 60% new oak and was barrel aged 18 months with four rackings.