

L'Ecole N° 41

2003 Seven Hills Vineyard Estate Perigee

Walla Walla Valley Appellation

Released: December 2005

Variety: 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 37% Merlot, 7% Cabernet Franc

Vineyard: Seven Hills Vineyard

This vineyard, planted in the wind blown loess of geologically young, mineral rich soils, is one of the Walla Walla Valley's most acclaimed vineyards. Perigee is a blend of the oldest and most distinguished blocks from our Estate vineyard, renowned for its rich elegance, seductive aromas and complex, silky finish. L'Ecole N° 41's partners in Seven Hills Vineyard are Pepper Bridge Winery and Leonetti Cellar.

Proprietary

Name: **Perigee** is the closest point to the earth in the moon's orbit. "Closeness to the earth" is an attractive attribute for Seven Hills Vineyard, since the wine is known for its earthy structure and suggests the environmentally sound and sustainable viticultural practices we utilize.

Harvest: 2003 will be recorded as the warmest vintage on record in the last 20 years and, for quality, this was good news! A mild, cool spring helped the vines recover from some slight winter injury in October of 2002. July and August were extremely warm, keeping berry size and cluster weights down, which produced lower yields. These conditions resulted in vibrantly fruity whites, and deep, rich extraction in the reds. A one-day rain in early September brought with it cooler weather, extending harvest and hang-time for improved fruit flavors and intensity.

Technical: Cabernet Sauvignon – Sept. 23-27, 2003, avg. 25.1% Brix, 3.51 pH, 0.52 g/100ml
Merlot – Sept. 5-13, 2003, 25.2% Brix, 3.61 pH, 0.49 grams/100ml acidity
Cabernet Franc – Sept. 17, 2003, 24.8% Brix, 3.52 pH, 0.45 g/100ml acidity

Bottled 1,506 cases July 15, 2005; 3.62 pH, acid 0.67 g/100ml, 13.9% alcohol by volume, <0.2% residual sugar

Description: *Perigee exemplifies this vineyard's characteristic cedary, black cherry elegance. Polished with perfumed aromas of exotic spice, velvety blackberry and silky black cherry fruit, this wine exudes power and grace on an endless, earthy 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 60% new oak. The wine was raked five times, then bottled unfinned and unfiltered to preserve its natural flavors.