2018 Merlot
Columbia Valley

WINEMAKER COMMENT
L’Ecole N° 41 is recognized as one of Washington State’s top producers of excellent Merlot and this wine delivers with great structure, color, and balanced acidity. Our Heritage Collection Merlot benefits from 60% estate-grown fruit.

VINEYARDS
Estate Seven Hills, Estate Ferguson, Pepper Bridge - Walla Walla Valley AVA
Candy Mountain - Candy Mountain AVA
Dionysus - White Bluffs AVA (Pending)
Klipsun - Red Mountain AVA

VINTAGE
- Perfectly dry harvest weather extended hang-time resulting in rich color and vibrant fruit flavors, another great vintage for Washington State.
- A late bud-break in mid-April was followed by a warm May with rapid canopy growth. A quick, even bloom set a uniform crop. A cool June contributed to healthy berry growth.
- July and early August were warm, with occasional heat spikes. Canopies were managed to avoid sunburn and irrigation was micromanaged. Intense cluster thinning was required to control yields.
- Veraison tracked 2017 in Walla Walla and was slightly ahead in other regions of the state. A brief rainfall shifted early September into cooler weather leading to two months of near-perfect weather conditions for final fruit maturity.
- Higher sugars were balanced against higher acid levels and wonderfully intense color and tannin extraction, big fruit flavors, and overall balanced structure. Another strong Washington vintage.

WINEMAKING
- Over 35 years of meticulous vineyard management and winemaking experience are fundamental to the quality of our wines and reputation for excellence. We are engaged in growing and making 100% of our wines.
- Each lot was hand-harvested ripe and gently crushed into 1.5 and 5 ton stainless steel fermenters.
- Gentle handling of the fruit through hand punch downs and gravity-assisted movements were utilized throughout the entire winemaking process.
- The wine was cleanly racked to small oak barrels, 30% new, with four rackings over 18 months.

TASTING NOTES
Exhibiting complex layers of raspberry, plum, and black cherry, accented by crushed roses, pencil shavings, and smoky cedar nuances, this full-bodied, vigorous Merlot bursts with flavors of macerated berries, coffee, and kirsch. Charming and ripe, it firms up to finish with a satisfying longevity.

Harvest Dates
SEPTEMBER 7 - OCTOBER 12, 2018
Average Brix 26.0°
Average pH 3.45
Average Acidity 5.4 g/L

Composition
80% MERLOT, 14% CABERNET FRANC, 4% MALBEC, 2% PETIT VERDOT
pH 3.68
Total Acidity 6.0 g/L
Alcohol 14.5%
Bottling Date FEBRUARY 18-19, 2020
Release Date APRIL 2021
Case Production 5,300