

L'Ecole

N^o 41

2020 Apogee, Pepper Bridge Vineyard Walla Walla Valley

WINEMAKER COMMENT

L'Ecole N^o 41 has been producing Pepper Bridge Vineyard Apogee since 1993. Apogee is our expression of this vineyard's distinctive and characteristic spicy bold aromas, dark fruit flavors, robust tannins, and rich structure.

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 Certified Sustainable and Salmon Safe vineyard.

VINTAGE

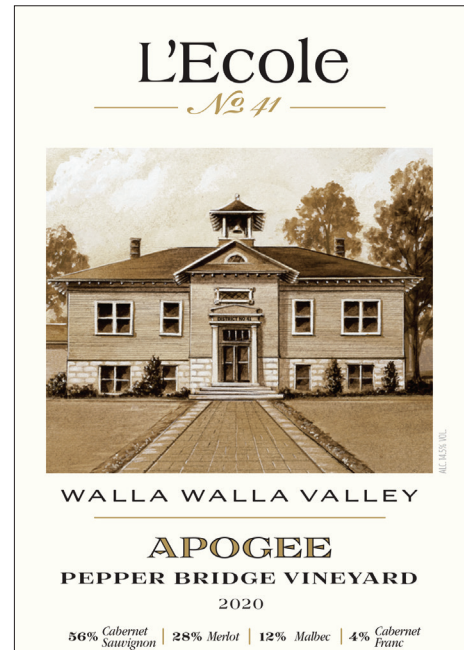
- An easy, mild growing season combined with low yields and a prolonged harvest resulted in wines with wonderful balance, color, and vibrant fruit.
- A normal but quick mid-April bud break was followed by warm spring weather. Freeze events in late 2019 lowered bud fertility, combined with rain and wind during June bloom, which resulted in unusually low yields.
- Heat accumulation tracked the long-term average with veraison on time in early August.
- Older CA/OR wildfire smoke briefly settled into the Columbia Basin the 2nd week of September. Fortunately, the impact on our grapes was negligible since most of the fruit was at a later stage of maturity, combined with the nature of it being older smoke. The diffused sunlight and cooler temperatures slowed ripening, extending harvest well into October.
- The long growing season combined with low yields resulted in wonderful balance, length, and aromatics in the whites, and concentrated flavor, color, texture, and structure in the reds.

WINEMAKING

- 40 years of meticulous vineyard management and winemaking experience are fundamental to the quality of our wines and reputation for excellence.
- Each lot was hand-harvested ripe and gently crushed into 1.5 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 100% small French oak barrels with 40% new and barrel-aged for 22 months.
- Blending occurred in the spring following its vinification and the wine was gently filtered prior to bottling.

TASTING NOTES

This single-vineyard Bordeaux blend presents intense aromas of black currant, fresh tobacco, rose petals, cocoa, and earth with subtle hints of graphite and spearmint. Flavors of mocha, nutmeg, and thyme are featured prominently on the elegantly structured frame. The palate is adorned with wild blackberry, baking spices, and fine-grained tannins that carry through to a robust and perfectly balanced finish.



HARVEST DATA

Harvest Dates	OCTOBER 6 - 17, 2020
Average tons/acre	2.5
Average Brix	24.6°
Average pH	3.44
Average Acidity	5.5 g/L

WINE DATA

Composition	56% CABERNET SAUVIGNON, 28% MERLOT, 12% MALBEC, 4% CABERNET FRANC
pH	3.78
Total Acidity	5.9 g/L
Alcohol	14.5%
Bottling Date	JUNE 29, 2022
Release	FALL 2023
Case Production	1,200