



Martin Clubb



L'ECOLE NO.41

Marty Clubb has built L'Ecole No. 41 into one of Walla Walla's flagships. Like Leonetti, Woodward Canyon, and Pepper Bridge, L'Ecole makes the wines that represent the region; the wines that signify Walla Walla. Only this year, Clubb's ship raised a second flag.

Apogee, a blend of cabernet, merlot and cabernet franc from Pepper Bridge, has been in production since 1993. It's often been L'Ecole's best wine in a vintage. This year, L'Ecole introduced Perigee, a red blend from Seven Hills, an Oregon vineyard in which Clubb is a partner. Tasted side by side, the two blends offer a great means of comparing eastern Walla Walla hills with western Walla Walla riverbank, and two great vineyards in one of the most exciting wine regions in this country.

This is not to discount the success that Clubb has always had with merlot, which he makes from both the Columbia and Walla Walla Valley AVAs; or his ever more impressive syrahs and his pair of pristine, detailed semillons, which are among the best in the state.

But Perigee and Apogee somehow feel like Clubb's pivotal expressions of the place he calls home. Pepper Bridge is lower in elevation and less exposed to the winds, and sits on old alluvial deposits. As a consequence, Apogee's earthiness is burlled and spicy, with a subtle burst of blackberry fruit, firm and deep, suggesting a long life ahead. Seven Hills is higher in elevation, a slightly north-facing patch of wind-blown exposed loess. So Perigee is more open and more savory, offering textbook Walla Walla smoked tomato, tea and soy spices, leafy and dark, like peat-laced soil. It will be fascinating to taste these two blends side by side in vintages to come. —P.J.C.

7 wines tasted, 3 recommended

94 '02 Walla Walla Valley Perigee Seven Hills Vineyard \$45 (6/05)

91 '02 Walla Walla Valley Apogee Pepper Bridge Vineyard \$45 (6/05)

88 '02 Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$30 (6/05)

Founded: 1983 **Winemaker:** Martin Clubb **Acres owned:** 50 **Annual production:** 28,500 cases **Estate grown:** 65% **Owners:** Martin & Megan Clubb **Known for:** Bridging two great expressions of Walla Walla: Seven Hills and Pepper Bridge **Location:** Walla Walla, WA **Website:** lecole.com