

NORTHWEST RIDGE



2018 Barrel Cuvée

THE VINTAGE

2018 heat collection was slightly below the vintage of 2017. This vintage was another warm vintage for Washington that was marked by ideal weather during the harvest season.

The Columbia Valley cycled through cool and warm months at the start of the growing season. April was cooler than usual, delaying bud-break slightly, followed by May which was one of the warmest on record to start the summer advancing bloom.

Bloom was notably fast and even, contributing to a larger crop size slightly above historic averages that required extensive thinning. This was followed by a cooler-than-average June.

July and August temperatures were quite warm with sudden spikes occasional heat, too much so that heading into veraison, 2018 was shaping up to be among the warmest vintages on record.

However, temperatures cooled considerably in September, creating ideal conditions for ripening, moderate days and cool nights. Harvest weather was ideal to provide a perfect dry harvest that extended hanging time for rich color and vibrant flavors. This vintage is overall lead to higher sugars balanced with higher acid levels, big fruit flavors, and a balanced structure.

THE DATA

Varietals: 63% Syrah & 37% Merlot

Harvest Date: 9/18/2018

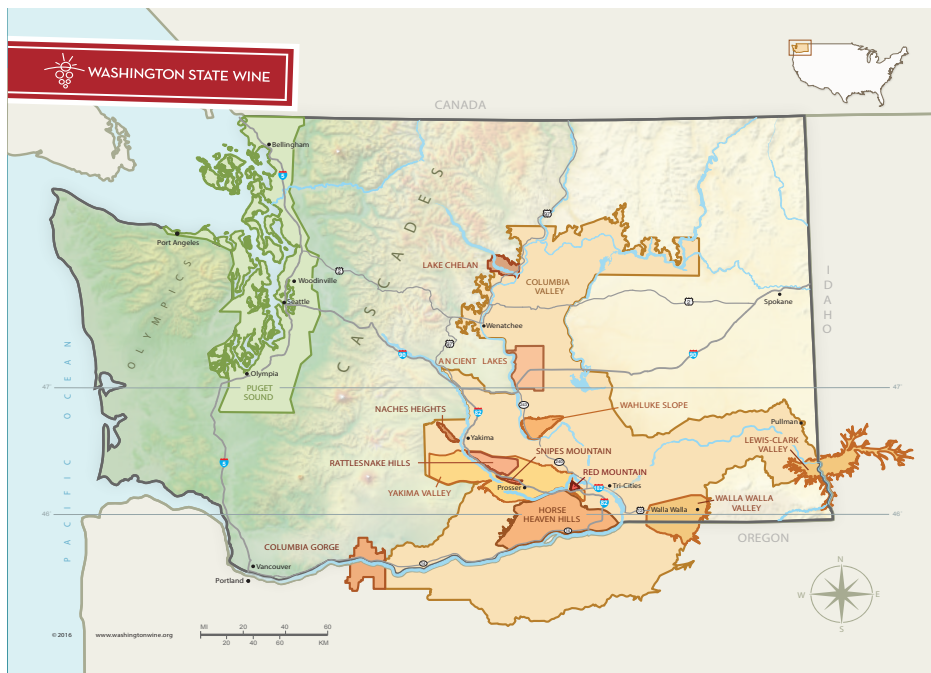
pH: 3.82

TA: 5.7

Alc: 14.1

THE NOTES

Complex fruit characteristics and balanced tannins. Aromas of ripe cherries, plum, and boysenberry for a fruit forward palate. Notes of vanilla, toasted oak, and brown spice linger on the long lasting finish.



THE AVA

Encompassing more than a third of the state, the Columbia Valley is by far Washington's largest growing region at nearly 11 million acres. The appellation is located in central, south-central, and south-eastern Washington with part of the appellation spilling across the border into Oregon.

The Columbia Valley is home to over 99% of all of Washington's vinifera acreage. Cabernet Sauvignon is the most planted grape followed by Merlot, Chardonnay, Riesling, and Syrah. However, over 30 vinifera varieties are currently planted in this region.

Variety typicity and pure fruit aromas and flavors are the hallmarks of wine from the Columbia Valley. For Cabernet Sauvignon, black cherry, cassis, and light, high-toned herbal notes are often the hallmarks. Merlots are redolent with red fruit aromas and flavors, such as sweet cherries, red currants, and raspberries, along with chocolate and, occasionally, mint. Chardonnays are mildly aromatic with aromas and flavors ranging from fresh green apple to stone fruit and tropical fruit depending on the warmth of the site. In terms of Riesling, cooler sites tend to produce aromas and flavors of lime, lemon, and green apple. In warmer regions this turns to stone fruit, particularly peach. Aromas and flavors for Syrah range from dark fruit, such as blackberries, to blueberries and cranberries. However, many are notable for being less fruit forward and more dominated by savory notes.

The relationship to the Missoula Floods, a series of cataclysmic events, defines the soil types of the vineyards in Washington. Most vineyards lie below the floodwaters with soils of loess—wind blown deposits of sand and silt—overlying gravel and slackwater sediment with basalt forming the bedrock. This provides a diversity of soil types that are well drained and ideal for viticulture. The Columbia Valley lies in the rain shadow of the Cascade Mountain range. The region has an arid and semi-arid, continental climate, receiving an average of 6–8 inches (15–20cm) of precipitation annually. Irrigation is therefore required to grow vinifera grapes.

This irrigation, along with consistently warm, dry temperatures during the growing season, provides growers with a large amount of control over grape development compared to many other regions of the world. This leads to minimal vintage variation and consistently high-quality wines. Early and late season frosts along with hard winter freezes are the main environmental threats. Due to dry temperatures and sandy soils, phylloxera has not as of yet established itself in the area, so most vines are grown on their own rootstock in contrast to many other areas of the world.