

2010 Columbia Valley Merlot

For whatever reason Merlot has been relegated to side show status in Cabernet Sauvignon's shadow over the last several years by the wine-drinking public.

I will be the first to come to the varietal's vehement defense, at least when it's grown in Washington state.

It's a thinner-skinned grape than some of its Bordeaux-varietal brethren. Thin-skinned grapes have a tendency to swell with water if there is rain during harvest. This dilutes flavor components and literally "waters down" the grape's potential.

We don't have that problem in Washington, particularly on Red Mountain. With an average annual rainfall of approximately 6 inches, we control how much water our Merlot vines receive leading up to harvest. That's why we are able to craft deeply colored, well-balanced, and intensely aromatic wines with the grape.

This 100% varietal, single-vineyard offering distills what makes Washington state, and specifically Red Mountain, a premier location for the grape on a world-wide scale.

We use 100% free-run juice with our Merlot, the gentlest method at our disposal for pressing fruit after our small-lot punch-down fermentations. Around the world, it is common to see Merlot used in Cabernet Sauvignon-based blends as a softening agent. That doesn't work on Red Mountain, where Merlot matches "king cab" toe-to-toe in depth of character and structure.

The 2010 vintage was atypically cool, resulting in longer hang times and extended flavor development. I would expect this wine to age exceedingly well, as it is fairly stout structure-wise and is enhanced—as of this writing—with a thorough decanting.

There's a reason this grape has garnered so much attention in Washington, and I urge you to find out for yourself what it's all about.

- JJ Williams

Kiona

VINEYARDS

2010
MERLOT

COLUMBIA VALLEY, WA

ALC. BY VOL. 13.7%

Appellation

Columbia Valley

Vineyard Sources

100% Kiona Estate, Red Mountain

Varietal Composition

100% Merlot

Barrel Treatment

24 months, 80% Once-Filled, 60F/40A

Case Production

477 cases, 12 x 750 mL, bottled 08-08-13

Technical Data

Ph - 3.58

TA - 0.727

Alcohol - 13.9%