

# L'Ecole No 41

## 2004 Columbia Valley Syrah Columbia Valley Appellation

**Released:** July 2006

**Variety:** 98% Syrah, 2% Grenache

**Vineyard:** This Syrah is a blend of five premier vineyards including: 28% Milbrandt Vineyard; 27% Willard Family Farms; 17% Goose Ridge; 10% Candy Mountain; 10% Stone Tree; and 8% Bacchus B5.

**Harvest:** While we encountered a number of challenges with the hard 2004 winter, we were pleasantly surprised by the enduring quality of many of the older vineyards. At most sites, a larger number of buds were left to make up for the winter bud damage. More focused viticultural management was required to tame these canopies, including multiple labor passes for shoot thinning and yield balance. Late summer ripening delivered up excellent quality despite lower than normal yields, a staunch reminder that sometimes the best vintages are cultivated from less than ideal growing conditions.

**Technical:** The Syrah from Candy Mountain, Milbrandt, and Stone Tree were harvested in mid to late September. Goose Ridge and Willard all harvested during the first two weeks of October. Average composition was 25.3% Brix, 3.68 pH and 0.53 grams/100ml acidity.

Bottled 2,649 cases February 21-22, 2006; 3.70 pH, acid 0.65 g/100ml, 14.8% alcohol by volume, <0.2% residual sugar

**Description:** *This Columbia Valley Syrah shows minty blueberry and plum fruit with brambly flavors of raspberry and cranberry. A complex panoply of mocha, leather, spice and pepper intermixed on the elegant, richly structured finish.*

**Vinification:** Each lot was hand harvested ripe and gently crushed into one-ton stainless steel fermenters. The must was inoculated with yeast and punched down by hand during fermentation to maximize fruit extraction. When fermentation was complete or we were otherwise satisfied with the level of tannin and flavor extract, the must was gravity fed into the press. After a gentle pressing, the wine was racked to tank and allowed to settle. The wine was then racked to 100% small oak barrels, with approximately 30% new oak, and was barrel aged 18 months with four rackings. The final blend was bottled unfiltered and unfiltered to preserve its natural flavors.