

L'Ecole No 41

2008 Columbia Valley Chardonnay Columbia Valley Appellation

Released: July 2009

Variety: 100% Chardonnay

Vineyards: This wine is a blend of three distinguished vineyards: 45% Schmitt Vineyard; 45% Evergreen and 10% Bacchus.

Winemaker

Comments: "Some of the best Chardonnays in Washington State are grown in the slightly cooler growing conditions of Yakima Valley and in the northern latitudes of the Columbia Valley. The Schmitt Vineyard (Yakima Valley) provides nice tropical fruit, while Evergreen (latitude 47 on the Columbia River) contributes crisp acidity and minerality. The old vines at the warmer Bacchus Vineyard provide a nuance of ripe melon and pear."

Harvest: A slow, cool spring in 2008 slightly delayed bud break into early May. However, warm May weather set the stage for uniform bloom and fruit set. Summer heat units were normal and July ended without typical heat spikes. Windier conditions increased vine stress resulting in added efforts to manage canopy growth for balance. August veraison was smooth requiring very little green thinning. With near perfect fall conditions – sunny, warm, no rain – harvest commenced slightly later than normal for most varieties. Considered a cool year in general, we saw higher acidity levels with yields a little below average.

Technical: The warmer Bacchus vineyard was harvested the second week of September while the cooler sites (Schmitt and Evergreen) were harvested in early October. Average ripeness was 24.7 Brix, 0.63 g/100ml acidity, and 3.45 pH.

Bottled 4,925 cases June 2-4th, 2009; 3.62 pH, acid 0.57 g/100ml, 14.2% alcohol by volume, <0.2% residual sugar.

Description: *This elegantly balanced Chardonnay shows robust acidity and purity of fruit with subdued tropical fruit, orange blossom and Asian pear flavors and subtle mineral nuances that gain complexity on a long, robust finish.*

Vinification: The fruit was lightly whole-cluster pressed to tank and allowed to settle. The juice was then racked off of the solids into mostly second and third year French oak barrels where it was aged sur lie and stirred for six months resulting in a rich mouth feel and a creamy full finish.