

Chateau Ste Michelle®

2005 ETHOS MERLOT

TASTING NOTES

“This is the pinnacle Merlot of the vintage. My goal is to shoot for an “old world” style, while showing off the power of Washington fruit. The wine delivers vibrant cherry fruit with silky, elegant tannins. We added a small percentage of Cabernet, Petit Verdot and Malbec for structure, color and complexity. Setting this one down for 5-10 years is certainly possible, although opening a bottle relatively soon with some lamb chops or prime rib might be a good idea too!”

Bob Bertheau

Bob Bertheau, Winemaker

VINTAGE

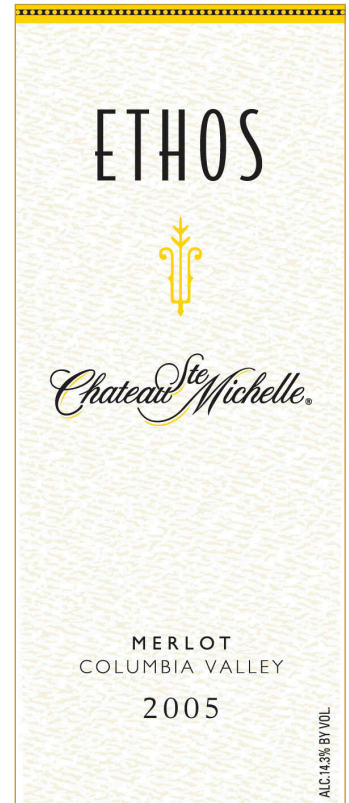
- The 2005 harvest tested our winemaker’s patience, but ultimately delivered excellent quality fruit.
- The growing season started cool, followed by 90+ degree days in July and August.
- September brought cool and constant weather, which extended the season, allowing grapes extra time to ripen on the vine and enhance flavor development.

VINEYARD

- Merlot from the best Columbia Valley vineyards were selected for this Ethos blend, including our Cold Creek and Canoe Ridge Estate vineyards.
- Cold Creek Vineyard, one of the oldest and warmest sites in Washington, contributed over half of the fruit for the blend.
- Planted in 1973, the low yielding old vines of Cold Creek produce small clusters and small berries, resulting in intense varietal flavors and deep color.
- Contributing 30% of the blend, the vineyard at Canoe Ridge Estate lies on a steep south-facing slope on the bank of the Columbia River. The site’s proximity to the river protects it from temperature extremes, allowing uniform ripening and excellent color development.
- Fruit from the Wahluke Slope rounded out the blend.

WINEMAKING

- Ripe grapes were destemmed, crushed and inoculated with various strains of yeast to maximize complexity.
- Daily gentle pumpovers were used to extract optimal flavor and color and minimize harsh tannins. The pumpovers can vary by block, tank and day of fermentation. Every ferment is tasted every day to evaluate the evolution of the tannins, modify extraction techniques and find the right moment to drain the wine off of its skins.
- Aged for 22 months in American and French oak, 79% new.
- Frequent aerative racking took place during barrel aging to soften tannins and enhance mouthfeel.
- Being able to combine the best of Cold Creek and Canoe Ridge into one wine is a fantastic luxury that can produce wines of both elegance (Canoe Ridge) and power (Cold Creek).
- Cabernet (10%) added structure and high-toned fruit, Petit Verdot (4%) contributed structure, color and intensity, while Malbec (2%) added flesh, jamminess and a wonderful spice component.



TECHNICAL DATA

<i>Alcohol</i>	14.3%
<i>Total acidity</i>	0.55g/100ml
<i>pH</i>	3.68
<i>Blend</i>	84% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Petit Verdot, 2% Malbec
<i>Cases produced</i>	1,900

FOOD PAIRINGS

<i>Foods</i>	beef, grilled salmon, lamb, strongly flavored cheeses
<i>Herbs</i>	basil, oregano, rosemary, thyme

