

Chateau Ste Michelle®

2003 MERLOT COLUMBIA VALLEY

TASTING NOTES

"THIS IS A SERIOUS MERLOT FOR THE PRICE, YET STILL SOFT AND SATISFYING.

WE CRAFT THIS MERLOT TO BE ON THE APPROACHABLE SIDE WITH A CORE OF RED CHERRIES AND RIPE FRUIT. WE CALL THIS OUR "I'LL HAVE ANOTHER GLASS PLEASE" MERLOT."

Bob Bertheau

BOB BERTHEAU, HEAD WINEMAKER

VINTAGE

- Dry, warm weather throughout the growing season in 2003 created excellent ripening conditions.
- Modest precipitation in August and September cooled the vineyards, slowed down ripening and allowed grapes to benefit from extra hang time.
- At harvest, fruit reached full maturity, with intense flavors, good sugar development and high natural acidity.

VINEYARDS

- Sourced from Columbia Valley vineyards in eastern Washington including our Cold Creek and Canoe Ridge Estate vineyards, as well as vineyards on the Wahluke Slope.
- Columbia Valley vineyards lie in the rain shadow of the Cascade Mountains and receive just 6–8 inches of rainfall annually.
- Warm, sunny days and cool evening temperatures create ideal conditions for intense aroma and flavor development in the ripening grapes.
- Sandy soils with low fertility and low water-holding capacity enable precise control of vine growth.

WINEMAKING

- The 2003 vintage marks the first red wines made by Bob Bertheau for Chateau Ste. Michelle. His mission is to produce a softer mouthfeel and enhanced complexity in the red wines, while highlighting Washington fruit character.
- Ripe grapes were destemmed, crushed and inoculated with various strains of yeast to maximize complexity.
- Gentle pumpovers during fermentation were used to extract color and flavor and produce soft, supple tannins.
- Aged 15 months in French and American oak, 24% new.
- Bob used earlier drain times and restrained oak to achieve a more approachable style for this wine.



TECHNICAL DATA

TOTAL ACIDITY 0.56/100ml

PH 3.67

ALCOHOL 13.8%

BLEND 76% Merlot
11% Cabernet Sauvignon
8% Syrah
3% Cabernet Franc
2% Sangiovese

FOOD PAIRING

FOODS beef, lamb, grilled salmon, hearty pastas

HERBS basil, oregano

SPICE Allspice, nutmeg, star anise

HERITAGE OF ACCLAIM

89 PTS *Wine Spectator* (2002 vintage)

★★★★ *Restaurant Wine* (2001 vintage)

88 PTS *Wine & Spirits* (2000 vintage)

93 PTS & "TOP 10 MERLOTS" *Wine & Spirits* (1999 vintage)

