

Chateau Ste Michelle®

2006 ETHOS MERLOT

TASTING NOTES

“My goal with the Ethos Merlot is to aim for an “Old world” style, while showing off the power of Washington fruit. This 2006 Merlot is even a more powerful, fruit-driven style than previous vintages. The wine delivers sweet raspberry and bright black cherry fruit character with elegant, dusty tannins. More than half of the fruit came from our Cold Creek Vineyard, which contributes power and concentration, while fruit from our vineyard at Canoe Ridge Estate adds spice and complexity.”

Bob Bertheau

Bob Bertheau, Winemaker

VINTAGE

- 2006 was a year of extremes in weather.
- A cooler than normal, wet spring was followed by a very long, hot summer.
- The weather was nearly ideal during the growing season. Summer fell into a consistent pattern of dry, warm days and cool nights.
- Harvest began early, with some white grapes being picked in late August.
- A cool spell in mid-September slowed things down and allowed more hang time for enhanced flavor development.

VINEYARD

- Cold Creek Vineyard, one of the oldest and warmest sites in Washington, contributed over half of the fruit for the blend (54%).
- 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.
- Our vineyard at Canoe Ridge Estate also contributed to the blend (20%) and 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 (26%) rounded out the blend for an enhanced sweet fruit character.

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 20 months in French and American oak, 87% new.
- Frequent aerative racking took place during barrel aging to soften tannins and enhance mouthfeel.
- Cabernet added structure and high-toned fruit, while Syrah and Malbec contributed flesh and jamminess.



TECHNICAL DATA

<i>Alcohol</i>	14.5%
<i>Total acidity</i>	0.54g/100ml
<i>pH</i>	3.79
<i>Blend</i>	83% Merlot, 10% Cabernet Sauvignon, 5% Syrah, 2% Malbec
<i>Cases produced</i>	2,300

FOOD PAIRINGS

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

