

ABEJA



2002 CABERNET SAUVIGNON

Columbia Valley

harvest dates: September 13–October 16

varietal composition: 91% Cabernet Sauvignon, 4% Cabernet Franc, 5% Merlot

barrel aging: 20 Months

oak composition:

100% French, tight grained, mostly medium toast, 85% new, 15% 1-year

alcohol: 13.68%

cases produced: 1354

bottling date: May 18, 2004; release date: November 1, 2004

optimum time for consumption: Through 2014

Having been out of Cabernet for a full year at the time of this wine's release, we are delighted to have it back, even if it is for just a short time. This is the follow-up to our first release, and we think you will enjoy it even more for its elegance and impeccable balance.

The 2002 vintage was an average year for growing degree days, though a cooler vintage than the opulent 2001. Seven Hills Vineyard and Conner Lee were the primary fruit sources in our 2001 Cabernet Sauvignon and in this vintage are blended with fruit from two additional exciting sites. The first is our own estate Heather Hill, located east of Seven Hills Vineyard in the Walla Walla Valley. The second is Sagemoor's Bachus Vineyard, with its 32-year-old vines. The combination yields a wine with even more complexity and varietal precision than before.

All of our fruit is sorted in a unique and meticulous manner. The first sorting takes place when the fruit is handpicked. Once at the winery, the clusters are again viewed and sorted by hand before going into the destemmer. After destemming, the berries are sorted a final time. The result is the fermentation of pure fruit, absent of any other material and a wine that is stylish and pure with tannins that are never bitter or green.

This wine is pretty, silky, rich and delicious. The nose is loaded with dense, dark blackberry fruit, cassis, sweet wood and shaved chocolate. The continuity from nose to palate is seamless. It is rich, intense and superbly balanced with excellent depth and length.

We always keep food in mind when making our wines, and this is why balance is so important. We like this Cabernet with a terrific cut of beef and a heap of morel mushrooms. It also pairs really nicely with game or lightly smoked meats. We've even tried it with cold pizza and it works!

I am so happy to be bringing in the music again, and maybe I overdo it, but there are surely much worse habits. Occasionally, I run across a song associated with our namesake and for this vintage it has to be "Tupelo Honey," from the album of the same name by Van Morrison. I also like the Allman Brothers' "Blue Sky," a classic that gives the wine plenty of time to evolve in the glass. Finally, the ultimate pairing: Ray Charles and Van Morrison together, singing "Crazy Love" on the new disc of duets with Ray Charles, "Genius Loves Company."

John Abbott—*Winemaker*