

Chateau Ste Michelle

Columbia Valley Merlot from Chateau Ste Michelle is a quintessential example of Washington's ability to produce elegant and richly flavored Merlot, combining ripe fruit, smooth tannins, and a touch of spice.

Columbia Valley Merlot 2022

Washington, USA



Alcohol :13,50 %

Composition: 85% Merlot, 10% Syrah, 5% Cabernet Sauvignon

Region and Vineyards

The **Columbia Valley**, located in Washington State, is renowned for its warm, sunny days and cool evening temperatures, creating optimal conditions for grape ripening. Sitting in the **rain shadow of the Cascade Mountains**, the region receives only 150-200 millimeters (6-8 inches) of rainfall annually, allowing precise control of vine growth.

The sandy soils of the vineyards have low water-holding capacity, ensuring that the vines produce concentrated, high-quality fruit. The growing season featured warm spring temperatures, followed by a mild summer, which allowed for extended hang time and flavor development. As autumn approached, warm days enhanced the ripeness and richness of the fruit, while the cool nights preserved the natural acidity, resulting in a well-balanced and vibrant vintage.

Winemaking

The **Columbia Valley Merlot** is composed of **85% Merlot**, **10% Syrah**, and **5% Cabernet Sauvignon**, showcasing a nuanced blend of power and finesse. The grapes were destemmed and fermented with various strains of yeast to enhance complexity and depth.

During fermentation, gentle pumpovers were used to extract color and flavor while ensuring soft, supple tannins. The wine was aged for **18 months in oak barrels**, with a composition of **15% new French oak**, **14% new American oak**, and **71% neutral oak** . This careful aging process imparted subtle notes of mocha and spice, complementing the wine's rich fruit profile.

Tasting Notes

- **Color**: Deep ruby red with vibrant clarity.
- **Aroma**: Aromas of **mocha**, **spice**, and **black cherry**, creating a warm and inviting bouquet.
- **Palate**: Smooth and rich, with flavors of **dark berries**, **chocolate**, and a touch of oak. The tannins are supple, leading to a balanced and elegant finish.

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Did You Know?

Merlot was one of the first varietals planted in the Columbia Valley, and Chateau Ste Michelle has played a pivotal role in defining Washington State's reputation for producing world-class Merlot.

Wine Pairing Ideas

- **Hearty pasta dishes**: The richness of the wine complements the savory flavors of tomato-based sauces and roasted vegetables.
- **Grilled lamb chops**: The wine's smooth tannins and mocha notes enhance the earthy and savory profile of the meat.
- **Wild mushroom risotto**: The wine's depth and complexity pair beautifully with the creamy, umami flavors of the dish.
- **Aged Gouda or Parmesan cheese**: The nutty and salty characteristics of these cheeses balance the wine's fruit and spice.



Wines & Spirits (W&S) : 90 Points (2019)

Generous in its dark plummy fruit and coffee'd oak frame, this merlot has a pleasing austerity to its firm dried-berry depths. It needs food; pour with a steak.Best Buy



Robert Parker (RP) : 90 Points (2017)

A delightful wine, the 2017 Merlot Canoe Ridge Estate Vineyard begins with hints of oak aromas, dark red fruit skin, notions of smoked sage, a delicate rocky essence and red flowers. Medium to full-bodied, the wine is bold and dense for a Merlot yet possesses a balanced structure with succulent tannins and glides to a long-lingering finish.