

# GORDON *Estate*



## 2010 *Syrah* ESTATE GROWN ~ COLUMBIA VALLEY



- **COMPOSITION:** 93% Syrah, 7% Cabernet Sauvignon
- **pH:** 3.81
- **TA:** 6.8 g/L
- **ALCOHOL:** 13.9%
- **PRODUCTION:** 1,500 cases

### VINTAGE

We cultivated our 2010 vintage during one of the coldest years in memory. Toward the end of August, later than we had ever seen, our grapes were just beginning to go through veraison, the change from hard green berries to soft plump fruit. With still no warm weather in sight we made the difficult decision to go through the vineyard and thin the crop. Wherever clusters were sitting on top of one another or the fruit load looked too heavy for the vine, we removed whole clusters of fruit. With less fruit to ripen the vines gradually picked up the pace but with the fall harvest looming we were still not sure the crop would ripen in time. Our prayers were finally answered when a beautiful Indian summer came upon us in September, when we had a week of +80°F weather and a week of +70°F, and the grapes finished their ripening nicely. The result was fruit of exceptional character with an excellent balance of acidity and ripeness.

### WINEMAKING

For our Gordon Estate 2010 Syrah we utilized successful techniques from vintages past for the development of structure and complexity: diversified yeast strains, drain and return method of cap management and whole cluster fermentation. A tried and true technique in Burgundy and the Rhone Valley, whole cluster fermentation utilizes the grapes directly from the field without de-stemming and crushing. With crushed fruit, the grape is gently broken open allowing the yeast immediate access the delicious nectar inside the berry. In whole cluster fruit the yeasts have to work their way inside of the grape and fermentation proceeds for several days before the skin of the grape is broken down and the yeasts are released. In this way, each and every intact grape acts as a micro-fermenter bringing a unique fruit character to the wine. To our surprise, the stems from the whole clusters also brought about an unexpected benefit—typically, stems are considered a negative in wine fermentations and American wineries will go to great lengths to remove any and all pieces of stem. The key to successful whole cluster fermentation is that the stems are not in pieces, which can impart bitterness to the wine; instead the intact stems add structure and length to the palate. With all of the tools in place, the wines were fermented in our open top tanks with a 6 day minimum fermentation time. Wines were pressed and settled in tank prior before racking to small oak barrels for aging. We aged individual wines for 18 months prior to making the final cuvee with bottling taking place in August of 2013.

### WINEMAKER'S COMMENTS

Sage, mint, oregano, violets, rose petals, orange zest, rainbow peppercorns and more all play hide and seek in the aromas of our 2010 Estate Syrah. The palate, equally complex, starts with bright red fruit that you can envision dripping down your chin as you bite in to it. All the aromas are present in the palate but exist in an ephemeral state as they duck and weave around the character of smoked game.



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