

CHEHALEM

2009 WILLAMETTE VALLEY CERISE

The Wine

Cerise is our name for a predominantly Gamay Noir blend with Pinot Noir. Both varietals are best done in Burgundy and both exhibit a palate of cherry flavors and aromas. “Cherry” in French, Cerise is our tribute to a high fruit, moderately serious red wine. In Burgundy they do one, too, called *passetoutgrains*, blended at approximately 80% Gamay Noir to 20% Pinot Noir, for drinking while waiting for their highly structured Pinots to develop. Ours is made with the same casual purpose in mind.

The Vineyard

Our oldest estate vineyard, Ridgecrest is a 55-acre vineyard on a 176-acre property. Beginning in 1980, this site pioneered grapegrowing on Ribbon Ridge, a small ridge on the western end of the Chehalem Range and Valley. Soils are Willakenzie, a transition soil series exhibiting characteristics of both volcanic and sedimentary underlying structures. The rich, supple black cherry and blackberry fruits are characteristic of Ridgecrest Vineyard and the Willakenzie soil type. Excellent acidity and a finesseful texture and finish are hallmarks of the vineyard site, being relatively high in elevation, mature in vine age, and deeply rooted. There are two acres of Gamay Noir planted at the site, in perhaps the oldest commercial planting in the United States.

The Vintage

The 2009 vintage may be one of the best, with nice balance in all ways for both reds and whites—very good quality and yields as well as good ripeness and acids. The closest vintage in memory might be 2002. It was the type of vintage to satisfy winemakers AND accountants, with yields in the 2.5–3 tons/acre average this year, compared to 2–2.5 in normal years, and with high quality demanding only patience to await flavor development. Fruitfulness caused some problems early on, with large berries and full clusters pushing off berries in the cluster, leaving early blocks to develop botrytis and require sorting. Later blocks were pristine and, assuming patience (and if nothing else, we’re patient!) to await flavor development rather than picking on analytical numbers like TA and brix, will be as good as any wines we’ve made.

STATS

Harvest Data:	Harvested 10/11/2009 @ 24.5 brix, 3.16 pH, and 6.2 g/L TA, from 2.0 tons per acre cropload
Fermentation:	10 days total fermentation with 7 days pre-maceration
Cooperage/Aging:	11 months in barrel, racking once
Bottling:	Crossflow and sterile filtered; bottled 9/27/10
Wine Selection:	Gamay Noir (80%) and Pinot Noir (20%)
Bottling Analyses:	14.3% alcohol, 7.0 g/l TA, 3.34 pH
Cases Produced:	182 cases
Suggested Retail:	\$24
Release Date:	May 2011

Winemaker’s Comments

Cherry. This wine is the true meaning of Cerise™. Black cherry, cherry candy, pie cherry, cherry cola, and chocolate cherry. We’ve got them all in abundance. A sweet-fruit entry starts the wine, with more tart cherry to follow, bright acid and a clean finish. Aspects of black and white pepper, dried flowers and spice complement the fruit on the palate, but you won’t miss the cherries.