

# Cascade Cliffs Vineyard & Winery

## Cliff Club – Fall 2017



*Freshly pressed Merlot from our estate vineyard.*

Greetings and good cheer Cliff Club members! Enclosed is your Fall 2017 Cliff Club package, your last of the year and one of the best. Normally we don't have enough Barbera and Nebbiolo to include both of these – our signature wines – into the Cliff Club packages. We planned ahead for this fall package, however, and are happy to announce that the **Columbia Valley (CV) Barbera** and **Reserve CV Nebbiolo** are both part of this current package! The hugely popular **Petite Sirah** is included as well as **Tempranillo** and **Goat Head Red**- all final stocks of inventory on these wines. Our newest **dry Gewürztraminer** wraps things up beautifully for the holiday season. If you are a Cliff Club **Red** member, our new **Horsethief Red** rounds out your package in a distinctly southern French style...

It has been quite the exciting (read: stressful) year as we have seen weather extremes from the temporary ice age back in January/February, to multiple weeks of triple digits in July/August. Add on a large-scale wildfire about 50 miles west of us and the gray hairs really start to show! Alas, everything worked out fine and dandy; no detectable smoke taint was found in our fruit from the fires around us, and the grapes all look and taste healthy and balanced regardless of Mother Nature's 2017 psycho-tour. We are truly blessed to be located in one of the world's most stunningly beautiful regions. And this past year, we really *needed* to keep reminding ourselves of this...

We are also immensely grateful for all of your support and cooperation this year. Many of you had to deal with shipping delays, closed highways, etc., and you all did it with impressive grace and patience. We hope that we communicated well with you in spite of these challenges and thank you kindly for hanging in there with us. We can't guarantee that these types of natural events won't happen again, but we can assure you that we'll always do our best to take great care of you.

Enjoy these delicious wines and have a wonderful holiday season!

~All of us at Cascade Cliffs Vineyard & Winery

# Cliff Notes

## 2015 Goat Head Red

**The Facts:** Our beloved house wine, Goat Head Red has been a mainstay of the winery for over 20 years. Each bottling brings forth a new blend, sometimes as simple as two different grapes and sometimes, like this vintage, as many as 10-12 different varietals are used! The result? A cornucopia of fresh un-oaked fruit for your glass that pairs with just about anything.

~**Vineyard source/AVA:** Estate (Columbia Valley), Waving Tree (Columbia Valley), McKinley Springs (Horse Heaven Hills).

~**Cooperage:** Stainless Steel, 12 months.

~**Case production:** 869

~**Aging:** Short term (now to 2018).

## 2016 Gewürztraminer

**The Facts:** We decided to forego the "off-dry" style with this wine and rather make a more serious, dry version of this classic French/German grape. Even though there is no residual sugar in this wine, there are still hints of lychee and nectarine flavors with a refreshingly dry finish. A fantastic wine to pair with white meats and Asian cuisine.

~**Vineyard source/AVA:** Lamonti Vineyard (Columbia Gorge).

~**Cooperage:** Stainless Steel, 4 months.

~**Case production:**

~**Aging:** Short term (now to 2018).

## 2015 Tempranillo

**The Facts:** Tempranillo is best known in the Rioja region of northern Spain, where this early ripener has been thriving for centuries. We've been working with this varietal for 7 years now and are considering making a Reserve version- that is, holding a selection of barrels back for extended barrel aging. Moderate acidity and tannins allow this wine to work well with many types of food, including wild game, lentil soups, and grilled meats.

~**Vineyard source/AVA:** Hogsback Ridge (Columbia Valley), Elder (Columbia Valley), and Chukar Ridge (Columbia Valley).

~**Cooperage:** American Oak, 12 months.

~**Case production:** 532

~**Aging:** Mid-term (drink now to 2020).

## 2015 Petite Sirah

**The Facts:** Also known as "Durif", Petite Sirah is a genetic cross of Syrah and the varietal Peloursin. Contrary to its moniker, Petite Sirah is typically a Big Red wine with plenty of tannins and inky color. Our 2015 Petite has the color and dark berry flavors typical to the grape, but softer tannins than usual. Pair this wine with red meats, hearty stews, and artisan whole grain breads.

~**Vineyard source/AVA:** Waving Tree (Columbia Valley).

~**Cooperage:** American Oak, 8 months.

~**Case production:** 302

~**Aging:** Mid-term (drink now to 2020).

## 2015 CV Barbera

**The Facts:** This wine is our official "crossover" Barbera, combining the more traditional style of our Estate Barbera with the more modern, fruit-forward character of the Blood Red Barbera. The varietals natural brightness from the acid shines through on the attack, treats the mid-palate to a rush of dark cherry/berry flavors, and finishes with a mouth-watering intensity. A beautiful wine to sip alone or pair with rich Italian dishes.

~**Vineyard source/AVA:** Estate (Columbia Valley), McKinley Springs (Horse Heaven Hills).

~**Cooperage:** American Oak, 12 months.

~**Case production:** 310

~**Aging:** Mid-term (drink now to 2020).

## 2014 Reserve CV Nebbiolo

**The Facts:** This wine spent over two years in the barrel and is a combination of both our own estate fruit and Horse Heaven Hills. More of a traditional style, with strong tannins on the finish, this wine has both floral and fruit aromas and elegant dried fruit on the palate. Make sure you serve this wine with a gourmet meal!

~**Vineyard source/AVA:** Estate (Columbia Valley), McKinley Springs (Horse Heaven Hills).

~**Cooperage:** American Oak, 26 months.

~**Case production:** 253

~**Aging:** Mid to long-term (drink now to 2023).

# Winery News



## 2017 Crush

As mentioned on the cover of this newsletter, the 2017 season was a challenging one for farmers in the Pacific NW. There's something to be said for consistency and predictability in weather, and while this year had its moments of expected weather, it also had its share of peaks and valleys. Fortunately, none of these challenges were too great to spoil the vintage. As this newsletter is being composed, roughly half of our total fruit tonnage has been brought in and everything looks, smells, and tastes great so far. Analytical figures (sugar, acid, pH) also look great and we expect nothing less than outstanding wines from this vintage.

## Welcome Wahluke!

This year we are excited to be working with vineyards from the **Wahluke Slope American Viticultural Area (AVA)**. North of the Yakima Valley, this area was established as its own AVA in 2006, is one of the warmest regions in WA state, and accounts for roughly 20% of the total harvested grapes in Washington each year. The fruit from this AVA benefits from the concentration of heat there and is known for its high quality. We will be bringing in Barbera, Dolcetto, Merlot, Petite Sirah, and Syrah from select vineyards in this area. And most importantly, you will get to taste this AVA in our wines beginning in 2019!



## Mark your Calendar

~Saturday, November 4<sup>th</sup>: **Cliff Club pick-up party!** Where: All locations. When: 12 – 5 PM in Wishram and Woodinville, 2 – 7 PM in Hood River. What: Come pick up your Summer Cliff Club, taste through the wines within it, mingle with your fellow club members, and have a bite.

Always a great time for all.

~Saturday, November 18<sup>th</sup> & November 25<sup>th</sup>: **Theme tasting – Fall Barrel Tasting!** Where: Wishram. When: 12 – 5 PM. What: Come taste the future as we'll draw samples of our up-coming 2016 wines from the barrels they are in. "Futures pricing" will be offered to club members on select wines and appetizers to be served. We will also offer futures tastings in Hood River and Woodinville- details to come.

~Saturday, December 9<sup>th</sup>: **Bordeaux Club pick-up party!** Where: All locations. When: 12 – 5 PM in Wishram and Woodinville, 2 – 7 PM in Hood River. What: Come pick up your Bordeaux Club package! We'll have appetizers to pair with your club selections and an extended wine menu.

## Contact us!

Hood River: 211 Oak St. Hood River, OR 97031. 541-436-4215

Wishram: 8866 HWY 14. Wishram, WA 98673. 509-767-1100

Woodinville: 15029 Woodinville-Redmond Rd, NE. Suite 300. 425-38-9520



# Vineyard Designate

Once upon a time, our winery's production was supplied entirely by our own estate vineyard. While we still use our own vineyard (pictured below), our need to purchase fruit from other vineyards has become crucial. Sourcing grapes from other vineyards to meet production demands is quite common with both smaller and larger wineries. The trick here is to be "smart shoppers" when choosing who and where to buy from...

Some of the factors we consider when choosing vineyards to purchase fruit from are:



- Where is the fruit is grown? Choosing a well-established AVA, like Horse Heaven Hills, can at least assure the potential for high quality fruit.

- How old are the vines? The grapes harvested from vines five years old versus vines twenty years old can make a big difference in the overall quality of fruit. Are all older vines better than younger? Not necessarily... But vines that have been proven to produce great fruit over the years are always the preference.

- How clean is the vineyard

management? We prefer vineyard sites that don't use any harmful pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides. If we pride ourselves on natural, "green" applications in our own vineyard, then the vineyards we buy from should be similar. With that said, we have to be sure that the vineyard is taking the proper steps to prevent issues like mildew, rot, mold, etc.

- How much fruit do we have to take? We prefer to have a lower yield when bringing fruit in. Many growers would like to sell you as much fruit as they can get off their vines, expressed in tons per acre. We require that the overall yield is fairly low, somewhere around 3-5 tons per acre. This preference will typically result in more concentrated, rich fruit.
- What is their vineyard management like? In addition to the cleanliness of the vineyard, we need to be sure that the vineyard is receiving the proper winter pruning, shoot and leaf thinning, green fruit thinning, as well as proper spray applications to both the soil and plants.



If all of these requirements are satisfied, then we are in business! In truth, we are very fortunate to have had access to clean, professional, high quality sites over the years. And now with the addition of sites in the Wahluke Slope AVA, we are even more proud of our sourced fruit. Here are some of our favorite vineyards we have worked with:

- McKinley Springs Vineyard, Horse Heaven Hills AVA
- Chukar Ridge Vineyard, Columbia Valley AVA
- Hogsback Vineyard, Columbia Valley AVA
- Lamonti Vineyard, Columbia Gorge AVA