

TRADITIONS
2006 Merlot



Overview

In 1997, we planted our first vines in the Eastern Washington AVAs of Columbia Valley and Wahluke Slope. At first glance, Eastern Washington is not your typical wine country. It's a remote, windswept, high desert dotted with sagebrush and tumbleweeds. But our family had been farming here since the mid-1950s and we believed the region's moderate temperatures, low rainfall and sandy soils were ideal for grapes. To help with the planting and farming, we hired well-respected viticulturist, James McFerran. Eight years later, after selling our fruit to many of Washington's preeminent wineries, we hired veteran winemaker Gordon Hill to produce wines from the best blocks. Today, we farm 13 distinct estate vineyard sites totaling nearly 1600 acres.

Vineyard

The majority of the grapes for our 2006 Traditions Merlot came from our estate vineyards in the Wahluke Slope AVA of Eastern Washington. Established in 2006, the Wahluke Slope is a sub-region within the Columbia Valley appellation. Located midway between Seattle and Spokane it is bordered by the Columbia River to the southwest and Hanford Reach National Monument to the east. The climate is warm enough during the day to fully ripen grapes, yet cool enough at night to ensure bright acids and firm tannins.

Wine

While the Wahluke Slope AVA is capable of producing excellent white wines, it is in the red arena that the region really shines. Grapes with warm-climate origins – Bordeaux, Italy, Rhone and Spain – are particularly well suited to our micro-climates and soils.

Our 2006 Traditions Merlot features fruit from some of our finest estate vineyards in the Wahluke Slope: Northridge, Don Talcott, Katherine Leone, Clifton and Clifton Hill. It is deeply colored and ripe with plums, cherries, toasted oak and blackberries. Rich, ripe and generous, it is smooth, sleek and very approachable.

Composition	Merlot (75%), Cabernet Sauvignon (11%), Syrah (7%), Malbec (4%), Barbera (3%)
Vineyards	Northridge, Don Talcott, Katherine Leone, Clifton, Clifton Hill
Alcohol	13.9%
TA	0.57
pH	3.8
Cases	5,211

“Individually, we’re just Butch and Jerry. But when we’re working together, we’re like one really talented person. This wine represents the best of both of us.”

Butch and Jerry Milbrandt