



Basel Cellars  
ESTATE WINERY

2015  
**MERLOT**  
COLUMBIA VALLEY



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An extremely hot summer in 2015 resulted in a long and extended growing season and made conditions favorable for early ripening. The warm, early site of Double Canyon was the first Merlot to come through the door. Those grapes were picked on August 31, the earliest we've ever picked Merlot. The fruit from the cooler Wallula site was picked next, and three weeks later the bright, fruit-forward Gamache Merlot came in during the last week of September. All three vineyard sites delivered intense ripe fruit and brought tons of complexity to the table.

These distinctive lots fermented slowly in small batches, with gentle extended maceration and minimum interference. Through this hands-off approach we allowed genuine nuances to develop which showcased the unique terroir of each vineyard. After a lengthy fermentation, wines were transferred into mostly neutral small French oak barrels to preserve the beauty and elegance of these different vineyard blocks. These wines aged in barrel for about 18 months and only the most expressive and vibrant barrels that showed the most personality and character were selected from each lot and then blended together prior to bottling.

This Merlot possesses beautiful nuances of deep, dark berry fruits and ripe cherry, complemented by intriguing aromas of rose petal, rhubarb and dark chocolate. Subtle accents of plum, cedar and graphite are also noticeable in the bouquet. As this wine breathes, definite hints of black currant, anise and leather will be more evident.

The soft, supple mouth feel will reveal bright and ripe berry fruits, toasty oak and integrated tannin. Lingering "sweet" fruit will please the palate, underlined by fair acidity, ensuring structure and finesse. It can definitely stand alone, but will show even better with your favorite roasted chicken with herbs, lamb burgers with Gorgonzola or wild duck breast served with a prune sauce. Cheers!

#### **TECHNICAL DATA**

**Vintage:** 2015

**Varieties:** 100% Merlot

**Vineyards:** Double Canyon, Wallula, Gamache

**Appellation:** Columbia Valley

**Oak:** 100% French Oak, 25% new

**Alcohol:** 15%

**pH:** 3.83

**T.A.** 5.4g/L

**R.S.** 0.2g/L

**Production:** 371 cases