

**2009 K Vintners Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah Ovide En Cerise Vineyard Walla Walla Valley**

(\$65) (a 67/33 blend): Good deep red with ruby tones. Musky aromas of dark fruits, herbs and black olive; today the syrah dominates the nose. Sweet, concentrated and quite pliant, offering a very suave, refined texture. This superb blend finishes with plush, noble tannins and outstanding persistence. **93**

**2009 K Vintners Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah King Coal Stoneridge Vineyard Washington State**

(\$100) (a 70/30 blend; made from whole-cluster syrah and whole-berry cabernet; 50% new oak): Good deep red. Aromas of blackberry, licorice and sweet oak. A sweet, lively, slightly high-toned fruit bomb on the palate, with superconcentrated, plush flavors of raspberry, currant and sweet oak. Conveys a strong impression of extract. Finishes vibrant and long, with serious tactile tannins. A very successful blend. **93**

**2009 K Vintners Syrah Morrison Lane Walla Walla Valley**

(\$45) Good bright ruby-red. Knockout nose combines black raspberry, mocha, brown spices, licorice, flint and game. Large-scaled, rich and opulent; a wave of plush fruit washes over the palate. The very long finish combines a distinctly wild gamey quality with wonderfully refined, building tannins. From a 1994 planting, which Charles Smith characterizes as "very old for around here." Plenty of structure here to support mid-term aging. **93**

**2009 K Vintners Syrah The Hidden Northridge Vineyard Wahluke Slope**

(\$70) (15.5% alcohol; from a 2001 planting on fragmented basalt and gravel above the flood line; 40% new oak; vinified with a high percentage of whole clusters): Deep bright ruby-red. Strong sweet red cherry is complicated by spices, rare steak and licorice on the nose and palate. Densely packed and very intense syrah with the power and freshness to age. Noble tannins are lush and sweet but serious. Definitely a site, and a wine, to watch. **92(+?)**

**2011 K Vintners Viognier Art Den Hoed Vineyard Yakima Valley**

(\$25) Pale green-yellow. Captivating aromas of lemon drop, peach and mint; at once bright and musky. Nicely dry but with a touch of oiliness that reminds me of the Old World. Flavors of peach, grapefruit, lemon and nutmeg are framed by a firm spine of acidity and accented by minerality. Boasts lovely texture and sappy, saline persistence. Done entirely in neutral barrels. Impressive. **92**

**2009 K Vintners Merlot Stoneridge Vineyard Washington State**

(\$45) (100% merlot; aged for 27 months in barrel, 50% new): Good medium red. Superripe aromas of plum, redcurrant, coffee, mocha, licorice and menthol. Intensely flavored and deep, with good energy giving the wine's currant and cocoa powder flavors lovely inner-mouth aromatic character. Offers surprising definition and finishes with terrific verve and lift. The crop level was less than two tons per acre, according to Charles Smith, who limited production to one cluster per shoot and fermented entirely with whole berries. Lots going on here: really interesting Washington State merlot. **92**

**2009 K Vintners Cabernet Sauvignon Stoneridge Columbia Valley**

(\$45) Bright, dark red-ruby. High-toned aromas of black cherry and licorice. Sweet, plush and dense, showing a silky texture and noteworthy energy to the harmonious flavors of currant and licorice. Very sexy, gentle cabernet finishing with melting tannins and excellent length. **92**

**2009 K Vintners Syrah Cougar Hills Walla Walla Valley**

(\$45) (from a Phelps clone; no viognier): Good dark red. Musky aromas of brown spices, smoked meat, sea shell, sesame paste and olive. Supple, sweet and fine-grained, with the intriguing element of sesame paste carrying through onto the palate. Boasts excellent volume without any impression of weight. No doubt idiosyncratic, but I enjoyed this very sexy, persistent syrah. **92**

**2009 K Vintners Tempranillo/Cabernet Sauvignon El Jefe En Chamberlin Walla Walla Valley**

(\$65) (a 66/34 blend): Good full red. Complex nose melds redcurrant, mocha, licorice, camphor and crushed stone. Supple and nicely concentrated, offering a glyceric, fleshy texture without any heaviness. This nicely structured blend finishes with good grip. **92**

**2009 K Vintners Cabernet Sauvignon/Syrah The Creator Old Stones & Cailloux Vineyard Walla Walla Valley**

(\$55) Good full red. Superripe aromas of redcurrant, plums, licorice, flint and smoke. Dense, sweet and powerful; concentrated but tightly wound today, conveying an impression of thickness and finishing with a chewy, saline quality and firm tannic spine. I wanted a bit more primary fruit and yet this wine has plenty of inner-mouth energy. **91(+?)**

**2009 K Vintners Syrah Pheasant Vineyard Wahluke Slope**

(\$35) (a flat vineyard on sand and gravel, where the vines run north/south; aged in 30% new oak): Good deep, bright ruby-red. High-pitched, highly perfumed aromas of lavender and rose petal. The element of floral oils gives terrific aromatic lift to the silky, concentrated mid-palate, which features subtle notes of dark berries and spices. Finishes with a suave dusting of tannins and very good length. I like this wine's light touch and inner-mouth lift. **91**

**2009 K Vintners Malbec Stoneridge Vineyard Washington State**

(\$70) Good deep red. Expressive nose offers dark berries, licorice, cardamom, graphite, exotic oak tones and a wild meaty quality. Supple, soft and gamey, but also quite plush, concentrated and deep (the yield here was reportedly less than a ton of fruit per acre). A very ripe, gamey style of malbec that will impress for its texture and concentration but could use a tad more grip and verve. **91?**

**2009 K Vintners Syrah The Deal Sundance Vineyard Wahluke Slope**

(\$40) (15.5% alcohol; this spent four months longer in barrel than the Pheasant Vineyard bottling): Good deep red. Saline, jammy aromas of exotic flowers and beefsteak tomato. Lush, glyceric and thick, with smoke and rock flavors joined by game and saline nuances. Not a fruity style; I'd like to have seen more verve, but the texture and finish are quite suave. Charles Smith notes that all of his 2009 syrahs were vinified with at least 50% whole clusters. **90**

**2009 K Vintners Syrah Milbrandt Wahluke Slope**

(\$30) (15% alcohol): Good red-ruby. A blast of red fruits on the nose, complicated by notes of smoke, game and flowers; almost liqueur-like. Supple and already quite appealing, with menthol and saline nuances adding interest to the cherry fruit. Ripe acidity gives the wine a firm shape and extends its finishing fruit. Finishes with slightly dusty tannins that will not get in the way of enjoying this wine now. The crop level here was under three tons per acre, according to proprietor Charles Smith. **90**

**2009 K Vintners Syrah The Beautiful Cougar Hills Vineyard Walla Walla Valley**

(\$60) (includes a bit of co-fermented viognier, "but it disappears into the wine," according to Charles Smith): Good medium red. Musky, superripe aromas of smoked meat and flinty minerality; not a fruity style. Then saline and sweet in the mouth, showing a bit more dark berry fruit than the nose suggests. But I don't find the high notes or the aromatic lift of the best 2009s from K Vintners. **89?**

**2009 K Vintners Grenache/Syrah The Boy Armada Vineyard Walla Walla Valley**

(\$50) (a 90/10 blend, fermented with 50% whole clusters; no new oak): Medium red. Musky red fruits, mocha and game on the nose. Supple and smooth but a bit blowsy; I wanted more mid-palate fruit intensity and shape. This soundly built blend finishes with substantial tannins. A new barrel or two might have contributed a bit more structure. **88**