



@charlesbieler

Charles@Bielerfamily.Net

Bielerandsmith.Com

©2015 Charles & Charles, Mattawa, WA

CHARLES & CHARLES

2014 CABERNET BLEND

COLUMBIA VALLEY, WASHINGTON

THE WINE

Like the previous two, 2014 was another all around 'A' rated vintage. But it was hot (warmest on record) and early (on average two weeks earlier picking than normal). Thankfully, the fruit set was excellent, allowing a healthy yield, yet surprisingly good balance, acidity, fruit concentration, and excellent tannin quality (textured but soft). There was no winter damage or spring freezes, and rain fell at the right moments, so we were very thankful for that. Despite the early start in warm areas, we picked up through Halloween in the cooler sites and had optimal ripeness all around. Since the 2012 vintage, all of our Syrah has been fermented whole cluster (with stems) in stainless tanks with fermentations started with native yeasts that come from the vineyards. The Cabernet Sauvignon was harvested and fermented separately, whole berry (stems removed) in stainless steel tanks also with native yeast for both primary and secondary fermentations. From beginning to end, the Cabernet and Syrah were on their skins for 35 days on average. Fermentations proceeded slowly and the wine sat on the skins post fermentation for a week or so for additional extraction. This sort of slow, small batch winemaking is almost unheard of at the scale that we produce. It brings an intensity and richness that belies the low level of alcohol (13.5%) and price point. The resulting wine is bold, rich and textured but not over the top - it remains wonderfully restrained and focused. Aromas of cocoa, coffee, tobacco, sweet black cherry, licorice, underbrush, gravel, and loads of cassis (fancy for black currant). It's an intense dark blue / purple in color with tremendous purity, depth, and focus. Tannins are present giving firm structure, yet the wine is still quite soft for being so young. The blend this year is 75% Cabernet Sauvignon and 25% Syrah.

THE VINEYARDS

We are incredibly fortunate to work with a sensational group of farmers across the full reaches of Eastern Washington. The following are our primary growers in order of biggest to smallest. Goose Ridge in Benton City which brings rich, deep dark fruit and power; Jones and Washington which are tremendous Wahluke Slope vineyards with sandy soils that grow small concentrated berries and give big fruit, yet still bright acidity. In the Yakima Valley, Upland and Art Den Hoed vineyards bring black fruit, and a savory earthy/gravelly quality. Last, but certainly not least, further north and east is the Frenchman Hills vineyard that we love. TA-0.58%, pH-3.89, RS-0.36%, Alc-13.5%.

THE LABEL

Charles Bieler & Charles Smith standing in front of the American Legion Post No. 35 building in Waitsburg, WA (north of Walla Walla). Charles Smith bought this building and painted it to create a conceptual art piece. Its intention is to provoke thought about the future while honoring the past. Strong, bold, true and now named for our American Legion Post No. 35 - this wine embodies traits we truly admire.

THE TERROIR

About 15,000 years ago the Columbia Valley was flooded by a series of ice age floods that deposited silt and sand over the entire area. The sediments deposited by the floods now make up the area's present-day sandy and gravelly soils. These conditions are ideal for grapevines and fruit development and allow all our vineyards to be planted on their own roots. The northerly latitude means more sunlight during the growing months which allows extended phenolic development, embodying unusual texture and naturally soft tannins. Large diurnal swings (30+ degrees on average between high and low temperatures) throughout the Columbia Valley ensures natural acidity and finesse.