



An Introduction to Mercer Estates

A HISTORY OF TWO FAMILIES

The Mercer and Hogue families have found common ground in a shared passion for the Columbia Valley and a winemaking heritage which bridges generations of excellence in Washington State agriculture. Their new winery, Mercer Estates, is located in Prosser, Washington. Mercer Estates builds upon Bud Mercer and Mike Hogue's legacy in the Columbia Valley, and closely involves their children, Barbara and Ron Harle of Hogue Ranches, and Rob Mercer of Mercer Canyons. Guided by more than twenty-five years of grape growing and winemaking experience, Mercer Estates aspires to create outstanding wines that exceed expectations.

Like many of the pioneers in Washington State, Mike Hogue and Bud Mercer's winemaking success started as farming ventures. The son of a hop farmer in the Columbia Valley, Mike Hogue was first introduced to the wine industry in 1978 with the opportunity to learn firsthand from Dr. Walter Clore, the father of Washington State wine. At the advice of a friend he planted the first vines that would eventually become The Hogue Cellars, the second largest winery in the state, with an enviable reputation for quality. In August 2001, Mike Hogue sold The Hogue Cellars and continues today to be a proud Hogue Cellars wine grape grower.

The Mercer family has been farming in the Horse Heaven Hills for four generations and growing wine grapes since the early 1970s. While the Hogues developed a stellar reputation for their vineyards in the valley, the Mercers planted one of the foremost farms in the Horse Heaven Hills, widely regarded by winemakers and connoisseurs as a premier appellation for red wines. In 1978, the Mercers developed their first major wine grape planting, which would later become Champoux Vineyard, renowned for producing award winning wines.

Dead Canyon Vineyard, a pristine 120-acre site adjacent to Champoux remained unplanted until 2006, when the Mercer and Hogue families announced their decision to plant Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah, the red wines that will form the backbone of Mercer Estates Horse Heaven Hills wines. Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Riesling, and Sauvignon Blanc grapes sourced from the Yakima and Columbia Valleys, many from Mike Hogue's premier vineyards, will round out the Mercer Estates portfolio.

A FAMILY WINERY MAKING WORLD-CLASS WINES

Pioneers in winemaking and viticulture in the Columbia Valley, the Hogue and Mercer families have helped shape the past and present of Washington State winemaking, and are confidently forging a new path ahead in the Horse Heaven Hills, Yakima Valley and Columbia Valley AVAs. Winemaker David Forsyth, formerly of The Hogue Cellars, is in charge of winemaking on behalf of the families. In the coming vintages most, if not all, of Mercer Estates wines will be estate-grown, bottled and produced.

Mercer Estates is committed to consistent, quality winemaking. Through generations of farming and winemaking in Washington State the winery's founders are pleased to count many vineyard managers and wine professionals as friends and partners in bringing the very best wines to consumers.

PRESENTLY, MERCER ESTATES OFFERS SIX WINES

Chardonnay, Pinot Gris, Riesling, Sauvignon Blanc, Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot

WINEMAKER

Winemaker David Forsyth grew up in eastern Washington and spent twenty-three years making wine and building The Hogue Cellars before taking on winemaking responsibilities at Mercer Estates. David believes in a “vineyard-centric approach,” and works closely with individual vineyard managers to elevate their sites and let the grapes achieve a natural expression of terroir reinforced by a non-interventionist philosophy of winemaking. Years of experience exploring the unique appellations and microclimates of Columbia Valley have enabled him to forge invaluable relationships with the premier vineyard managers in the region.

David has embraced his transition from a staff of forty-five, producing over 500,000 cases a year at The Hogue Cellars to a staff of three in the Mercer Estates cellar. On an average day, David is at work in the cellar, tasting the wines, but also dragging hoses, filling barrels, and cleaning tanks with his team. In David’s words, “I missed the simplicity of family winemaking, and am in a unique position to be part of the Mercer Estates experience from the ground up. Great winemaking encompasses every decision you make from vineyard to bottle, however small in scope. When you’re more hands on you can influence every part of the process personally to make the subtle decisions that define quality.”

Today, David works with a smaller group of vineyard managers and spends considerably more time in the vineyards. He has experienced the emergence of many new wineries and vineyard plantings over the past ten years; this privileged perspective gives him a deep understanding of which grapes grow best in each appellation.

A former member of the U.S. Skydiving team as well as an experienced skier, David is not afraid to take risks, but he also recognizes that patience, perseverance and experience are critical to success. “I’m always trying to express what makes my wines unique and different,” he shares. “My wines emphasize a natural fruit character and their terroir, the elements that come from careful stewardship of the vines and care in the cellar, not from a complexity we impose on the grape.”



VISITING THE WINERY

The Mercer Estates winery was built in Prosser to receive the 2007 harvest, and a public tasting room is scheduled to open in spring 2009. The architecture of the winery facility is very clean, modern and beautiful, with a bronze colored exterior that reflects the stark beauty of the outlying Horse Heaven Hills. The farm-classic tasting room with attached barrel room will allow visitors to enjoy Mercer Estates wines and tour the winemaking facility. The area is rapidly becoming a destination for serious wine lovers as well as media and trade professionals drawn to the area’s many new wineries and more established wine ventures. Aside from wine, visitors to the Columbia Valley can also enjoy boating, fly fishing and golfing.

Both the Mercer and Hogue families have deep ties to the community and are invested in the preservation of Prosser for generations to come.

SUGGESTED RETAIL PRICING FOR MERCER WINES

Chardonnay 2007 | Columbia Valley | \$17

Sauvignon Blanc 2007 | Columbia Valley | \$15

Pinot Gris 2008 | Columbia Valley | \$15

Cabernet Sauvignon 2006 | Horse Heaven Hills | \$24

Riesling 2007 | Yakima Valley | \$15

Merlot 2005 | Horse Heaven Hills | \$24

PLEASE CHECK WITH US ABOUT NATIONAL AVAILABILITY OF MERCER WINES.

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