



## *An Introduction to Mercer Estates*

### A HISTORY OF TWO FAMILIES

Through shared passions for sustainable grape growing and winemaking, and a heritage that bridges generations of excellence in Washington agriculture, the Mercer and Hogue families founded Mercer Estates in Prosser, WA, the heart of the Columbia Valley winemaking, in 2006. The partnership, led by Rob & Brenda Mercer of Mercer Canyons in the Horse Heaven Hills and Ron and Barb of Hogue Ranches in the Yakima Valley, Mercer Estates produces distinctive wines from their diverse vineyard holdings. As pioneers in Washington State agriculture, the Mercer and Hogue families' winemaking success started as farming ventures established over 100 years ago.

The son of a Hop farmer, Mike Hogue, was first introduced to Dr. Walter Clore, the founder of the Washington winemaking industry in 1978. At the advice of a friend, Mike planted the first vines at Hogue Ranches and went on to build the second largest winery in WA, with an enviable reputation for quality. His daughter and son-in-law, Barb and Ron, now lead the team at Hogue Ranches and continue to a long history of grape growing and winemaking for the Hogue family.

The Mercer family has been farming in Eastern Washington for four generations. Their first Vinifera grapes were planted in the early 1970's at their ranch in the Horse Heaven Hills, now renowned for producing some of the region's top red wines. In 1978, the Mercers established their first major vineyard planting and currently supplies grapes for wineries that consistently achieve top accolades for their wines. Rob and Brenda Mercer continue their family's long legacy of quality and sustainability in agriculture.

### A FAMILY WINERY MAKING WORLD-CLASS WINES

Throughout their long histories, the Hogue and Mercer families have helped pioneer and shape the Washington State wine industry's past and have established a standard of excellence in their appellations through a philosophy of sustainability, quality, value and authenticity. All told, vineyards span three appellations; Horse Heaven Hills, Yakima Valley, and Columbia Valley, giving us a broad range of site characteristics to choose from in our wines.

Our winemaking team is led by nationally acclaimed winemaker David Forsyth, who boasts over 25 years of experience in the Columbia Valley. David grew up in Eastern Washington and honed his skills with some of the region's top producers before coming to Mercer Estates.

Years of experience exploring the unique appellations and microclimates of the Columbia Valley have allowed him to gain invaluable insight and strong relationships with premier vineyard managers in the region. He believes in a "vineyard-centric approach" to winemaking, working closely with each vineyard manager to elevate their sites and achieve a natural expression of the unique terroir in each block. This privileged perspective gives him a deep understanding of which grapes grow best in each vineyard.

Making hand crafted wines, David is often at work in the cellar, tasting the wines in barrel and tank for blending, but also dragging hoses, filling barrels and cleaning tanks with his team of four experienced winemakers and one cellar master. In David's words "I like the simplicity and creativity of family winemaking, and am in a unique position to be part of the Mercer Estates experience. Great winemaking encompasses every decision you make from vineyard to bottle, however small in scope. When you're hands on, you can influence every part of the process personally to make the subtle decisions that define quality."

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

## THE WINERY

The Mercer Estates winery was built in Prosser to receive the 2007 harvest, with a public tasting room open in 2009. The clean, modern architectural design integrates natural elements and with a bronze colored exterior that reflects the stark beauty of the surrounding Horse Heaven Hills. The farm-classic tasting room and attached barrel room allows visitors to take in the sights, sounds and aromas of the wine-making process and provides an educational setting to learn about our winemaking and family history. A one acre vineyard, known as “Carma’s Block”, is planted on the property and provides another opportunity to educate guests as well as provide a beautiful setting for events and patio tastings. Our friendly and knowledgeable staff welcomes visitors daily for tastings and comparisons. Private tours are offered by appointment.

## THE VINEYARDS

Washington wine growing benefits from unique, desert like, conditions which prevent the existence of vine pressures, such as phyloxera and mildew, allowing vine varieties to be planted on their own roots, unlike many of the world wine regions. Pure, mountain water is provided by the nearby Columbia River as a source for irrigation. Located at 46 degrees North Latitude, similar to that of the Bordeaux and Hermitage regions of France, days are longer than growing regions to the South. Large diurnal swings provide warm days and cool nights during the growing season; which provide balance, and a long, cool ripening period in September and October, allowing growers to harvest at optimum maturity. These factors, coupled with diverse, well-draining soils, make eastern Washington, one of the world’s most exciting winegrowing regions.

Mercer Estates’ vineyards are located in the important sub-appellations of Horse Heaven Hills and Yakima Valley. Boasting a diverse cultural of varieties, soils and microclimates, our vineyards provide many winemaking options. Sustainable farming practices ensure a true expression of vineyard character with minimal impact on the environment; soil, vine health, and therefore grape quality, are of utmost importance.

Our Horse Heaven Hills vineyard are farmed by Rob Mercer and include three specific sites; Dead Canyon Vineyard, Spice Cabinet Vineyard and Big Teepee Vineyard. Horse Heaven Hills AVA, the warmest sub-appellation in the broader Columbia Valley AVA, is renowned for producing some of Washington’s top red wines, expressing intense flavor and structure. Planted to a diverse culture of varieties including Cabernet, Merlot, Syrah, Grenache, Mourvedre, Petit Verdot, Malbec, Sangiovese and others, they truly are our Spice Cabinet

Our Yakima Valley Vineyards, part of Hogue Ranches, include Sunnyside Vineyard, Brooks Vineyard and Spring Creek Vineyard. As the coolest sub-appellation in the Columbia Valley AVA, Yakima Valley AVA is known to produce some of the finest white wines in the region and the world. Planted primarily to white varieties such as Riesling, Chardonnay, Gewurztraminer, Pinot Gris and Sauvignon Blanc, Hogue Ranches supplies grapes to some of Washington’s most famous wineries saving some of the best fruit for Mercer Estates.

## MERCER WINES

Chardonnay 2009 | Columbia Valley

Sauvignon Blanc 2009 | Columbia Valley

Pinot Gris 2009 | Yakima Valley

Cabernet Sauvignon 2008 | Columbia Valley

Riesling 2009 | Yakima Valley

Merlot 2008 | Columbia Valley

PLEASE CHECK WITH US ABOUT NATIONAL AVAILABILITY OF MERCER WINES.

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