



Wine Club Tasting Notes

May 2008

2004 Columbia Crest Reserve Syrah Columbia Valley, WA

This is absolutely ridiculous, but I just went through the Wine Club 'archives' and I realized it's been since July of 2005 since we've brought you wines from Washington state, which is far too long. At least I'm making up for lost time bringing you two killer selections. After you taste the red in this month's bag, you are going to want to give me a hug – let's just say I HOOKED YOUR A** UP! But enough of how great I am, let's get down to brass tacks and discuss the wine...

The first order of business is to let you know Washington state is producing some of the best Syrahs the United States has to offer, hands down. Can't tell you exactly why – some grapes just grow better in certain regions. (Think Pinot Noir from Burgundy, Sauvignon Blanc from New Zealand, etc.) Columbia Crest prides itself in producing handcrafted, superior-quality small-lot wines, as well as affordable everyday Washington wines. Their first release in 1984 started a tradition that has established them as one of America's most popular and fastest-growing wineries. In fact, if you've flipped through any wine publication over, say, the last 15 years you've undoubtedly noticed they've managed to pile up plenty of awards and accolades. (Deservedly so, in my opinion.)

The second thing you need to know is with the Reserve line of wines at Columbia Crest, each wine is made in a separate "winery within the winery" by a dedicated artisan winemaking team and production is extremely limited. I could blather on about how special this Syrah is, but the proof is the juice in the bottle. This Reserve Syrah is crafted in a Cote Rotie style, meaning there's a little bit of the white grape Viognier in the blend. It boasts generous Syrah aromatics of white pepper, cocoa and blueberry, with hints of Viognier's subtly sweet orange peel, pear and rose petal. Spice and earthy overtones, hallmarks of the Horse Heaven Hills terroir, are followed by mouth-filling flavors of dark chocolate, cocoa, and roasted coffee bean and a seductive blueberry-raspberry finish. This wine screams to be consumed with lamb or a big, juicy steak!

Two final notes: For those of you who care what the Wine Dictator, I mean *Wine Spectator*, says, this wine did get 90 points. Also, if you haven't drunk your

March red, the Yalumba Shiraz, conduct a little experiment – both wines are made in the same Cote Rotie style, but are quite different from one another, so perhaps open them side by side for a little compare and contrast...Wine Dictator Style!