

## **Gordon Estate Winery – Columbia Valley AVA, WA – Sales Brief – 2019**

### **Summary**

- A True Family Winery. This 35+ year old vineyard site has been owned and operated by the pioneering Gordon Family since 1980, now in the hands of the second generation – General Manager Katie Gordon Nelson and Vineyard Manager Marc Nelson.
- The unique own rooted estate vineyard at 625' elevation overlooks the Snake River in Eastern Washington.
- Consulting Winemaker Hilary Sjolund, of Wine Boss joined the team in 2016.
- The combination of a unique site, wine growing experience, and a brilliant winemaking team result in extraordinary values in the resurgent Washington state category.

### **Location – southern Columbia Valley, 15 miles from the confluence of the Snake & Columbia Rivers; east Red Mountain and northwest of Walla Walla – at 625' elevation.**

- Jeff & Bill Gordon, with the consultation of Dr. Walter Clore of Washington State University established some of the red varietal plantings in Eastern Washington, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Syrah. The first varietal planted was Chardonnay planted in 1980.
- The sunny weather and diurnal temperature swings combined with the complex soil of rich volcanic soils, Missoula flood sediment and the unique Kahlotus sandy loam produce great conditions for expressive wine grapes.
- The family farm is still growing organic Rainier, Bing and Chelan cherries and alfalfa in addition to the vineyard to this day.

### **Estate Vineyards**

- The Estate contains just over 100 acres of wine grapes plus 127 acres of organic cherries and alfalfa.
  - Soil: the vineyard is primarily made of Fine Sandy Loam soil, a very specific soil to this site - called the Kahlotus series. The soils are deep, well drained, nutrient rich and are composed of glacio-fluvial sediments mixed with loess deposited by glacial meltwater floods 12-18,000 years ago during the Missoula Floods.
  - Slopes: 0 to 65 percent
  - Growing Season Averages: Sunlight 17 hours, 31 degrees Fahrenheit diurnal swing
  - Plantings – all own rooted:
    - Cabernet Sauvignon – 35.6 Acres- mix of clones 4, 6 & 8
    - Merlot – 21.1 Acres - Clone 3
    - Chardonnay – 22.2 Acres- clones believed to be Wente or Prosser clones
    - Syrah – 15.2 Acres- Phelps Clone
    - The additional 6+ acres are planted to Gewurtzaminer, Alicante Bouschet, Petite Sirah and Petit Verdot. A couple of experimental clones of Cabernet Sauvignon, Tempranillo, and Malbec.

### **Winegrowing**

Jeff Gordon and his team are proud of their roots as farmers and devoted to the highest quality in their vineyard to in turn produce the best wines possible. They have learned that having complete control over the viticulture practices lends itself to making superb wines in the cellar, that is why they only use estate grown fruit in their wines. This is the oldest 100% estate winery in the state of Washington.

- The Kahlotus series soil are unique to this area and are not found in any other wine growing regions.
- Controlled drip irrigation provides the vines the water they need at critical growth stages. It is also necessary to deprive them of water at certain growth stages to control canopy size and maximize fruit quality.
- The wines are consistently unique to this site where they are the only winery in Washington State overlooking the Snake River. Consumers know what to expect when they open a bottle of Gordon Estate wine.
- They cultivate as little as possible and let the soil structure and soil microbiology work in their favor. They use minimal organic fertilizer or chemical input in their wine grape production. They limit the applications to what is necessary to maintain their quality standards.

## **Winemaking Regime & Philosophy**

We make terroir driven wines that represent the tremendous efforts we put into growing our grapes. The grapes are picked and immediately crushed on site. The reserve tier wines are distinguished by hand sorting and destemming into half-ton fermenters. For aromatic red wines like Petite Sirah we often gently ferment whole berries for preservation of aromatics. A combination of open bins and open-top French oak barrels are used for fermentation and macerate over a 10+ day period with punch downs up to 3 times per day. We press the grapes directly into barrels. We select our barrels to frame the wines while highlighting fruit and varietal expression, using approximately 85% French oak and 15% American and a combination of new and neutral oak depending on the varietal. The red wines are aged 18-23 months in barrel and racked 2 times prior to bottling- once after 6 months of aging on lees, and once before bottling.

Our grapes for the Estate Wine programs are destemmed, crushed, and put directly into 9-ton stainless steel tanks. Grapes macerate and ferment for 10+ days and are extracted using a mix of pump-overs and pneumatic punch downs up to 3 times per day. Grape skins are pressed directly to barrel. We use 10% new French and American oak each vintage.

Our Chardonnay programs differ primarily with the imparting of oak. We keep the Estate Chardonnay clean and crisp in stainless steel with only barrel aging 30-40% in oak, while keeping the remaining fruit in stainless steel tanks up to bottling. The Reserve Chardonnay is made in a more classic style, imparting more oak characteristics by allowing 100% of the fruit to age in oak.

### **Focus Wines**

**Estate Chardonnay, Columbia Valley** - consistently is aromatically fresh, citrusy crisp, with concentrated-complex fruit and touch of minerality while remaining approachable. Avg. production: 1500 cases.

- Pressed straight to a stainless-steel tank, juice is settled for 12+ hours, 85% of the juice is racked to a stainless-steel tank and 15% to neutral French oak barrels. Juice is inoculated with the neutral S. Bayanus yeast to ferment coolly at 60-65 degrees Fahrenheit.
- No malolactic fermentation keeps the natural acidity high.
- Batonnage is performed every other week for 4 months before the wine is left to age sur lie for an additional 3 months to create a dynamic texture on the palate.

**Estate Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** – The 30+ year old vines produce an elegantly layered dark fruit Cabernet year after year. Refined tannins integrate nicely with the lively acids for a long savory finish. Avg. production: 3200 cases.

- The fruit is hand sorted before destemming and crushed into 9-ton stainless steel vats.
- 98% Cabernet Sauvignon, 1% Malbec, 1% Syrah
- Aged in a mix of new and used French & American Oak for up to 22 months.

**Estate Merlot, Columbia Valley** – Merlot is the flagship red wine of Washington state and ours is a rich and balanced expression of this classic Bordeaux varietal. Ripe flavors of plum, juicy Bing cherry, and spice are balanced by vibrant acidity and the distinctive minerality that comes from our site. Avg. production: 2250 cases.

- 100% Merlot
- Aged for 22 months in 31% new French Oak and 19% new American Oak, and the remaining 50% in neutral oak barrels
- The fruit is sorted by hand before being destemmed and allowed to ferment for 10+ days. The fruit is then extracted using a combination of pump-overs and pneumatic punch downs up to 3 times per day. Skins are pressed directly to barrel.

**Estate Syrah, Columbia Valley** – This wine has proven to be a fan favorite among consumers and critics alike for its brooding depth of red fruits with complex aromas of brown sugar crumble, honey, clove, and dried herbs. The ripe fruit entry gives way to a meaty wine with notes of plum, cedar, and cherries. The silky textured wine has complexities of brown sugar, honey aromas with clove spice and dried herbs. Avg. production: 1600 cases.

- The fruit is hand sorted, destemmed
- Aged in 31 % new French & 5% new American oak barrels for 18 months

### **Complementary Wines**

**Malbec, Columbia Valley** – Originally only 1.6 acres were planted, but became very popular with club members, it was decided to plant an additional 3.8 acres in 2012 – and we may plant more. Our Malbec is a fresh, red fruit focused light red wine that works well with many dishes. Avg. production is 400 cases.

- Aged 20 months in 40% new Hungarian oak creating a distinct baking spice and leather frame for this vibrant

red wine

- This varietal was originally blended into other wines, it was not bottled monocépage until 2013 when the extraordinary character of Malbec on our site became clear

**Reserve Chardonnay, Columbia Valley** – The Chardonnay for the classic Chardonnay consumer. This golden colored Chardonnay has medium rich oak characteristics, although there is no malolactic fermentation that maintains a zesty green apple and lemon acidity and keeps the finish crisp with hints of ginger. Avg. production: 380 cases.

- Barrel fermented in 50% new French oak, 50% neutral French Oak from tight grained forests with long, low to medium toast levels for structure and honey-hazelnut complexities.
- Aged Sur Lie for 10 months

**Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon, Columbia Valley** – Our Reserve Cabernet is primarily focused on extracting the best of Clone 6. This clone of Cabernet shows a wide range of rich cherry and dried cherry fruit flavors with the warmth of black pepper and roasted chilies. They are aged in tight grained, medium toast French oak barrels and allowed to age longer for rounded tannins and a rich mouthfeel prior to bottling. Avg. production: 870 cases.

- Aged in 62% new French Oak and 38% neutral oak for 22 months
- 100% Cabernet- 80% Clone 6 for structure, 10% Clone 8 for fruitfulness and 10% Clone 4 for aromatics

**Reserve Tradition, Columbia Valley** – Our proprietary red blend showcases the best Right Bank Bordeaux blend for each vintage. The wine is barrel selected each vintage for the most concentrated and aromatic fruit expression of Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, and Petite Verdot. A complex blend with secondary and tertiary layers that is reminiscent of old-world wines. Ripe fruit aromas lead to dark red fruit flavors mingled with notes of violets and complementary. Avg. production 320 cases – as Mother Nature allows.

- Made from a majority of rich, concentrated Merlot & Cabernet Sauvignon fruit, Malbec & Petit Verdot are blended for aromatics and structure to complete this unctuous and dynamic wine
- Aged 23 months in 45% new French oak & 10% new American oak, with the remaining 45% in neutral oak barrels

For more information on wines, visit the website at: [www.gordonwines.com](http://www.gordonwines.com)

#### **Account & Buyer Fit**

- 1) Focus on buyers cognizant of values from around the world outside of California. Wine programs that feature Bordeaux varietals from Argentina, Chile, the Languedoc and other regions are primed for Gordon Estate wines.
- 2) Buyer palates that appreciate old world complexity of minerality and herb/spice notes as well as the balance of Right Bank Bordeaux wines will appreciate these wines.
- 3) Buyers familiar with the quality of family owned and operated estate based programs versus assembled, bulk wines for fictional producer labels will understand the extraordinary value of the wines. These are real wines made by real people.
- 4) Wine programs that feature the historic Washington producers such L'Ecole No. 41, Leonetti, or Woodward Canyon will be interested in the history of our wines.