



Hedges Family Estate in the Red Mountain AVA: one of the top ten Washington wineries, according to locally based wine writer Paul Gregutt

THE MAGIC MOUNTAIN

In a little under 40 years, the Red Mountain AVA has established itself as one of America's finest wine regions. Jonathan Swinchatt explores the history, geology, and philosophies that have made this corner of the Yakima Valley a standard-bearer for Washington State's burgeoning fine-wine reputation

When Jim Holmes and John Williams bought 80 acres (30ha) of dusty land on Red Mountain in southeastern Washington State in 1972, they did so as neophyte real-estate speculators. They imagined a fortune—or at least a profit—arising from elevated land prices, pumped up by population pressure coming from an expanding Tri-Cities (Pasco, Richland, and Kennewick) to the east and the Yakima Valley to the west. They had come to real estate after trying their hand at stock picking, a gamble at which they proved significantly less astute than their background as research

engineers might have led one to expect. Their method of choosing this particular piece of land perhaps revealed something of their likelihood of success as real-estate entrepreneurs: It was up for sale by Williams's father-in-law, who had bought it the previous year for \$100 an acre. He sold it to them for double the price, creating a certain fond resentment in the pair, who thought “the old codger” was perhaps exploiting them, though in conversation the word “crook” sometimes arises, albeit with a smile that suggests warm remembrance.

Holmes and Williams, metallurgical scientists at the Hanford Nuclear Facility that lay to the north of Red Mountain, were notably flexible, however, and willing to change their ways. Shortly after buying the land, they came across a scientific article by Walter Clore—later to be designated the “father of Washington wine”—describing his experiments with wine grapes. For nearly 20 years, Clore, then a horticultural scientist at what is now Washington State University's (WSU) Irrigated Agriculture Research and Extension Center (IAREC) in Prosser, had been growing hundreds of grape varieties and making small lots of wine in glass carboys under identical conditions free of oak, trying to find the best cultivars to grow in the state. A panel tasted the resulting wines, rating them on a scale of 1 to 10. “Nothing would get over about four and a half,” remembers Holmes, “but Lemberger [also known as Blaufränkisch] got to six, and another—perhaps Chardonnay—up to a low five. When we read that, we thought it sounded good enough for us, so we planted grapes.” That they chose to grow grapes in such parched and dusty land was one of those fortuitous decisions that seem so prescient in hindsight: 35 years later, the outskirts of the Tri-Cities on the east, and Prosser, the nearest population center on the west, are still some distance from Red Mountain, while Red Mountain grapes, and the wines made from them, are revered in the world of Washington wine.

In the face of serious obstacles—not the least of which was an absence of roads, electricity, and water—growing grapes cannot have been a decision taken lightly. Still,

Holmes and Williams pooled the last of their cash to drill a well that hit an aquifer, just as their money ran out; and then, in 1975, they initiated grape growing on Red Mountain, with 10 acres (4ha) of Riesling, Chardonnay, and Cabernet Sauvignon. They called their vineyard Kiona, the Yakima name for Red Mountain, which translates as the far more precise “Brown Hills.” The notion that they might be pioneering one of Washington's most esteemed wine regions was as far from their minds as this serene landscape was from the Garden of Eden.

Geological drama

The Red Mountain American Viticultural Area (AVA) lies in southeastern Washington, in the easternmost corner of the Yakima Valley, tucked into a large, U-shaped bend in the Yakima River. Driving west out of the Tri-Cities, shortly past the intersection of routes 12 and I-82, a hill rises ahead and slightly to the right, a flattish cone with smooth slopes—a slight, tanned, upturned breast, its apex capped by a radio tower that, in a somewhat bizarre way, accentuates the image. Traveling on, the conical hill turns out to be the end-on view of a long, linear ridge facing southwest, its short, steep, upper slope merging into a gentler lower ramp that ends 500ft (150m) from, and 200ft (60m) above, the Yakima River, separated from it by a steep incline that bottoms out in a small cliff of basalt. Outside the rectangles of irrigated fruit—apples, cherries, peaches, pears, and grapes—the land supports sagebrush and little else. Yet, even in its otherwise Dickensian austerity, a softness



Jim Holmes at Grand Ciel tries to bring the desert back into the vineyard, thereby creating a more natural balance there

spreads across the landscape—a Botxed surface free from harsh creases, except along the river, where bare and jagged exposures of basalt reveal the wear of ancient floods. This dichotomous physiognomy reflects a history of geological drama and catastrophic events that would, were they to happen today, decimate the human population of eastern Washington.

Red Mountain (perhaps a somewhat hyperbolic designation for a ridge that tops out at 1,410ft [430m]) is the surface expression of a wrinkle in the earth's crust, one of a series of generally east-west-trending ridges that form the Yakima Fold Belt in the southwestern part of the Columbia Basin in eastern Washington. These ridges began to rise during the emplacement of a massive series of lava flows, the Columbia River Basalts, that sprung from linear vents near the present Washington/Idaho border, burning their way

across the land westward to the Pacific Ocean. These flows, formed between 17 million and 6 million years ago, reach a total thickness of about 15,000ft (4,600m) in the center of the Columbia Basin and, together with contemporaneous river-channel deposits, provide the bedrock foundation for most of the vineyards east of the Cascade Mountains.

The dust through which Holmes and Williams scabbled as they searched for the boundaries of their land, however, is much younger than the basalt bedrock. Beginning about 18,000 years ago, glacial ice dammed the Clark Fork River near the Idaho/Montana border, backing up behind Glacial Lake Missoula, a body of water so extensive that, when the dam burst, it let loose a volume of water estimated to have equaled the combined flow of the ten largest rivers on Earth. The resulting flood crashed across the Columbia Basin, several hundred feet deep, stripping soil, exposing and

eroding the underlying basalt, and carrying off everything that lay in its path. Pushing its way across the land, the water hit Wallula Gap, a narrow opening in the hills southeast of Pasco that strangled the flow, stilled the flood, and formed a lake on its upstream side that filled the valleys of the Columbia Basin. Fine rock debris, once suspended in the violent flow, settled out, forming a layer of “slackwater” sediment, a 3–4ft- (1m-) thick “graded bed,” coarse at the base, finer at the top. As the lake slowly emptied through Wallula Gap, it left behind thousands of square miles of mudflats drying under the sun, exposed to the dominant southwesterly winds that snatched up silt and clay into great dust storms, roiling with heavier sand at their base. The sand piled up into vast dunes, while the finer material, carried to the northeast on the wind, settled out as a thick layer of loess, the geological term for wind-blown dust.

More was to come. After the dam burst and released the flood, another took its place—a second Lake Missoula formed, and once again, after a few decades, the dam burst and sent another flood of similar size roaring across the Columbia Basin, with the same results. And then, in a cycle of 35–55 years, Lake Missoula was dammed and released at least 40 times and perhaps as many as 100 over the next 6,000 years. When the floods finally ceased, the winds kept blowing, carrying fine sediment to the northeast, creating loess deposits that are, in some places, more than 250ft (80m) thick.

When the flood hit Red Mountain, it reached to within a couple of hundred feet of the top of the ridge, which breached the flow. The waters split around the edges of the hill, creating a back eddy on the southwest side, where swirling currents deposited a complex mix of coarse and fine sediment. With successive floods, silt and sand of slackwater deposits were cut through with discontinuous lenses of coarse gravel, all later covered by loess and dune sands to depths that range from a foot or two (12–24cm) to several yards (several meters). This is the material in which Holmes and Williams planted their first vines and that now supports some 1,100 acres (445ha) of vineyards. The sediments fill a small basin bounded on the northeast by Red Mountain and on the south by an east-west-trending ridge called Goose Hill. The Yakima River flows north from Goose Hill past the northwestern end of Red Mountain, forming the third side of a triangle, within which lies the Red Mountain AVA. At 4,040 acres (1,635ha), it is the smallest AVA in Washington—perhaps the most renowned, and one of the most precisely defined and internally consistent of all AVAs.

The fruit of the earth

The land of Red Mountain slopes to the southwest in a gentle curve, steeper in its upper reaches, flatter toward the Yakima River, a surface relatively unscarred by erosion and nearly devoid of the distinct topographic irregularities and environmental niches that characterize larger AVAs. A deep ravine, unplanted, cuts into its west central edge, and its northern extremity is a complex of small drainages and intervening ridges, but otherwise the vineyards of the AVA share a southwestern sun aspect unaffected by surrounding hills or diverse slopes. Though eight different soil series have been recognized and mapped, the three that cover most of the AVA are variations on the theme of a relatively thin layer of loess or dune sand over slackwater sediments and/or coarse flood debris. The soils tend to have high pH—around 8.4—reflecting an abundance of calcium carbonate, which occurs as crusts on particles in the lenses of coarse flood debris and layers of caliche, common in desert environments, that sometimes need to be ripped and broken to encourage root penetration. The high pH leads to low nutrient availability, a natural control on vigor, as is good water drainage, a combination that provides growers with significant control over vine development.

This control is accentuated by a desert climate—Eastern Washington lies in the rain shadow of the Cascade

Mountains. Moisture from Pacific storms falls on the Cascades, robbing the eastern reaches of the state of water. At Red Mountain, rainfall averages 4–7 in (10–18 cm) per year, most of which falls in winter. Storms drifting across the Horse Heaven Hills to the south split around Red Mountain, dropping rain east and west and leaving the AVA under clear and sunny skies. Temperatures soar during the summer to more than 100°F (38°C) in August, but the clear desert skies lead to nighttime cooling and temperature swings of 40–50°F (22–28°C) that encourage retention of acidity in the grapes. The days at north latitude 46°26' are long, the summer hot, leading to total heat summations averaging over 3,000 growing degree-days (F), rivaling Napa, 600 miles (970 km) to the south. Grapes ripen here every year, even in a relatively short growing season (averaging 180 days), with a winter freeze that can arrive anytime from the end of September to the end of October, though it has come as early as mid-September and as late as mid-November.

The upside is that the fall is cool and grapes can usually hang for weeks without developing excessive sugar through dehydration. A periodic deep freeze can cut the vines back to the ground, but here, as in most Washington vineyards, the vines are on their own roots and grow back true to type—unlike grafted vines, which regenerate as the rootstock, not the

grafted scion. In normal years, the slope of the land provides effective cold-air drainage. Some growers think that ungrafted vines put the grapes one step closer to reflecting place, but no evidence exists to refute or support this hopeful conjecture. Likewise, it is speculation rather than hard science that suggests this area of sandy soils and freezing winter temperatures will stay forever free of phylloxera. If the speculation proves false, the results could be disastrous.

Pete Hedges, winemaker at Hedges Family Estate, succinctly characterizes the effects of Red Mountain terroir: “So, within some reasonable range, the terroir is dictating the character of the fruit. The berries will be small, so we’ll probably have higher tannin. We have thicker skins, we think, because of the combination of wind and sun. Our soils are fast-draining, and the lack of water and nutrients determined what Red Mountain was going to be—there’s not an abundance of anything that would allow the vines to get drastically out of balance [...] so we never had wines that were too dilute. We always had wines with character, because it was all limited by terroir.”

The power and structure for which Red Mountain wines are known was apparent from the first wine made from

Kiona grapes, in 1980 at Preston Cellars in Pasco. Winemaker Rob Griffin (now owner of Barnard Griffin Cellars) noted that the Kiona fruit, particularly the Cabernet Sauvignon, stood out in the company of fruit from other vineyards. Holmes and Williams took that as a sign to plant more acreage and encouraged friends to join them. Roger Johnson and Al Ward had already established Ciel du Cheval in 1975, and Patricia and David Gelles followed with Klipsun in 1981. More recently, studies at IAREC have shown that Red Mountain fruit is indeed different, with tannin concentrations that range from about 800 mg/l to 1,300 mg/l—considerably higher than the average values for other Washington wine regions or the Napa Valley, where values (in both cases) hover around 500 mg/l.

Balancing act

In a world in which short-term thinking reigns, impatience is the norm, and immediate gratification is the standard, and at a time in which most wine is made to be easily

appreciated on release, the challenge at Red Mountain has been to balance the tannic power and structure—which provide depth and long-term aging potential—with sufficiently ripe fruit to provide reasonably early drinking pleasure. A simpler solution, perhaps, would be to follow the modern trend and use the summer heat and the fall hang-time to produce

ultra-ripe grapes with “physiologically mature” skins, seeds, and stems, high sugar levels, and the attending smooth mouthfeel and jammy delights of fruit-forward wine with high alcohol and low acid. But the growers and winemakers of Red Mountain are more ambitious than this: They recognize the special quality of this piece of land and have worked to allow the place to express itself in grapes and wine. To a significant degree, the task has been to modify sun exposure and manage tannin, the latter phrase suggesting that we know more about the complex world of polyphenol chemistry than perhaps we do. Nevertheless, the growers and winemakers of Red Mountain have developed an evolving set of strategies that—on the basis of scores from a variety of wine critics that regularly hover in the mid-90s—appears to have had considerable success. It is a tale of a wine culture that has been based on interaction between growers on Red Mountain and winemakers who live and work more than 200 miles (320 km) from the vineyards that produce their fruit.

Red Mountain is, in fact, best known through wines made by winemakers who live elsewhere—to be more specific, in cosmopolitan, sophisticated, affluent, food-rich, wine-drinking Seattle and its surrounding communities.

Eastern Washington, where the grapes are grown, is mostly agricultural, rural, down-home, plain-fare, beer-and-soft-drink country. This is not the social milieu favored by those who make and sell expensive world-class wine—and indeed, the best wine coming from Red Mountain is world-class. Recognition of this began in the early 1990s, when vineyard-designated Merlots from Andrew Will Winery made by Chris Camarda from Ciel du Cheval fruit began getting scores in the low 90s from *The Wine Advocate*. Before that, few people were putting vineyard names on labels, and Red Mountain fruit had little notoriety. Growers at Red Mountain began to focus on red grapes, primarily Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot, though some regard Red Mountain Cabernet Franc, fully ripened every year and very winter-hardy, to be Red Mountain’s most outstanding variety. Tom Hedges thinks Syrah will eventually become the favored grape, and several growers have planted other Rhône varieties, including Grenache, Mourvèdre, Cinsault, Cunoise, Roussane, Marsanne, and Viognier. Kiona still grows Lemberger, and Scott Williams has several acres of Gewurztraminer. One might conclude that Red Mountain is still very much in an exploratory phase of youth.

In youthful wine regions, work in the vineyards is often a scramble of making up for the mistakes made early on by novice grape growers, who are well intentioned and

thoughtful but who run afoul of the inevitable unintended consequences. So it has been with row orientation at Red Mountain. Holmes and Williams planted their first rows north-south, in order to balance the sun’s energy on opposite sides of the vine. Those who followed the pair, assuming perhaps that these nuclear scientists knew what they were doing, copied the original orientation, which was by then conveniently parallel to the road that runs across the AVA and perpendicular to its east-west tributaries, making row access particularly easy. At some point, the exact time lost in the intertwined web of shared memories, a solar imbalance became apparent, a heat discrepancy one side of the vine to the other. This overheating made itself known to growers as west-side sunburn and a difference in sugar content of up to 2° Brix between east- and west-facing fruit. The effect of the difference is out of proportion to its scale. To avoid the disconcerting weedy or vegetative flavors of unripe fruit requires ripening the lower side fully, pushing the high side to sugar overload and risking the excessive alcohol that many at Red Mountain seek to avoid. In existing vineyards, the common solution has been to split the vine canopy, letting the west side drape in a sort of louche sprawl to partially shade the grapes. In more recent

plantings—Grand Ciel, Golitzin, Cara Mia, new vineyards at Hedges—rows have been offset from 11 to 20 degrees or more to the west, increasing exposure on the east side and reducing heat on the west. The difference in ripeness, side to side, has dropped to 0.5° Brix or less. Skewing the rows has unskewed the ripening.

The tannin factor

Tannin is a more complex issue—a matter of the confusing chemistry of polyphenols and anthocyanins, organic molecules that come in a bewildering array of shapes and sizes. Tannins reside in skin, seeds, and stems, with seed tannins (according to Dr Jim Harbertson of IAREC) providing the greatest astringency. Ordinarily, seeds contain about 75 percent of the tannin in a grape, and as the seeds ripen and become woody (“physiologically mature”), the tannins attach to other molecules from which they are difficult to tear loose, accounting for the tendency of wines made from ultra-ripe grapes to have a smooth

mouthfeel, lacking the astringency and grip of tannic structure. (Perhaps it should be mentioned that some wine drinkers, even in the fruit-loving United States, do indeed still appreciate a bit of tannic grip to clean the mouth and free the taste buds from the coatings of rich food in a way that an unctuous modern wine fails utterly to do.) Under

conditions of deficit irrigation—the norm in the desert climate and limited water of Red Mountain—tannins move into the skins in quantities three to four times what they otherwise might be. However simplified and basic this information about tannin is, it does provide at least a bit of insight into the tannin-management strategies used by Red Mountain grape growers and winemakers.

The work begins in the vineyard, balancing canopy growth and grape yield, aiming for optimum ripeness and a late harvest, allowing development of the compounds that come with long hang-time and result in wines of depth and interest. Scott Williams, who grew up at Kiona and seems to know the property as an extension of his being, relies on intuition and experience to “get the fruit ripe at the right time with the right kind of balance.” At Ciel du Cheval, owner Jim Holmes and vineyard manager Ryan Johnson rely on a precise irrigation protocol—centered on extreme deficit irrigation (that is, no water) from fruit-set to veraison—monitoring plant uptake of moisture with 140 continuously reporting wireless sensors on 160 acres (65 ha). They call this risky process—which flirts with damaging the vines by taking them a step too far—“riding the tiger” and attribute to this regimen the elegant intensity

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of Ciel du Cheval tannin profiles. Patricia Gelles attributes the intense tannic structure that characterizes Klipsun fruit to the wind that buffets the vineyard, which sits on the western margin of the AVA, just above the Yakima River. She thinks little can be done in the vineyard to modify tannin profiles, and she leaves that task up to the winemakers who buy her fruit, among them some of the most highly regarded in the state. It seems to work—in 2002, Klipsun was designated by *Food and Wine* magazine as one of the 25 greatest vineyards in the world.

The major growers on Red Mountain—Ciel du Cheval (105 acres [42ha]), Klipsun (120 acres [50ha]), and Kiona (65 estate acres [26ha])—sell to many of the same winemakers, the most renowned of which include DeLille Cellars, Andrew Will Winery, Betz Family Winery, Quilceda Creek, and the newer Cadence. The first four of these were all included in Washington wine writer Paul Gregutt's list of the top ten Washington wineries, as was Hedges Family Estate. With the exception of Hedges, the others are located in or around Seattle, and all made their reputations using Red Mountain fruit. They truck their grapes overnight the 200 miles (320km) from Red Mountain to Seattle—a trip that appears to have little effect on quality, thanks, perhaps, to relatively mild daytime temperatures in the fall and cool nights.

Once in Seattle, the grapes are treated gently and with special care, much like a favored friend coming off a long flight. As a group, these winemakers tend to keep fermentation temperatures low, prefer to punch down rather than pump over, and separate up to 80 percent of the seeds part-way through fermentation, avoiding excessive extraction of astringent seed tannin in an environment of increasing alcohol. Bob Betz adds a sorting table after the crush, specifically to extract the tiny “jacks” that attach grape to stem, viewing them as a source of “a certain hard phenolic feel” in the resulting wine. They press at low pressure to limit the contribution of skin tannin—Scott Williams at Kiona uses only free-run juice in his top-tier wines, while Chris Upchurch at DeLille presses at just 0.2 bars and uses the entire press run. They prefer gravity transfer—mainly through emptying fermentation bins with a rotator mounted on a forklift—to using pumps, avoiding shear stress that can split seeds and crush skins. The outcome is powerful wine with Red Mountain character: intense tannic structure balanced by vibrant acidity and pure varietal fruit—classic stuff made to age but interesting to drink when young and to follow as its personality matures. Each of these winemakers has established a house style, most leading with Cabernet Sauvignon, though Cadence's flagship, Bel Canto, is modeled on Cheval Blanc and Camarda prefers blends of Merlot and Cabernet Franc with Cabernet Sauvignon in the background. His approach non-dogmatically honors the grapes: “I wasn't really looking for anything in the grapes; at the beginning I was just trying to get them into the bottle. [...] I wanted to complete the process, to see what happened, see what was there and go with it. That process continues today.”

Pete Hedges picks a bit early and works for wines with good balance and “a bit of astringency in the mouth,” so that they work well with food. Ben Smith of Cadence notes without surprise that his best market is New York City, where palates accustomed to European wine styles appreciate the more classic character of his Bordeaux blends.

Green on red

In this time of “green” thinking, attempts to lower our carbon footprints, concern for the environment, and attraction to things local and natural, discussions of organic and biodynamic farming arise sooner or later. Most of the people interviewed for this article have considered both methodologies and have decided, for specific and cogent reasons, to forgo them in favor of what they feel are more reasonable, less doctrinaire, greener, and more sustainable approaches. They note, for example, that sulfur is allowed in biodynamic agriculture yet is a harsh substance that harms pests and pest predators alike. They cite the increased energy use and soil compaction caused by the more frequent and slower tractor passes that are necessary when using the less effective pest-control products allowed in organic and biodynamic farming. They acknowledge that great wines are being made under biodynamic protocols elsewhere but are as yet unconvinced of the efficacy of the method for Red Mountain. The exception is Hedges Family Estate, where Tom Hedges was attracted to the concept of biodynamics for reasons that involve both farming and marketing. So far, on their 50-acre (20ha) estate vineyard, yields have dropped and expenses have increased, but they are only a couple of years into the process and still unsure of the eventual outcome. Hedges vineyard manager John Gomez calls it “New World meets Old World biodynamics”; they buy their biodynamic preparations from the Josephine Porter Institute in Virginia and their compost from an outfit in Sunnyside, up the Yakima Valley, rather than producing it all on the property.

Seeking perhaps to atone for so altering the desert, Jim Holmes has initiated an effort to bring the desert back into the vineyard, hoping to interrupt the agricultural monoculture and create a more natural balance. When they first planted Kiona, “the desert didn't know what to do about us, and then the leafhoppers discovered they love the vines, so now we have leafhopper problems. Year by year, there was always something coming out of the desert, figuring out they could eat some part of the vineyard.” Over the years, predators have arrived and achieved some balance with the pests, but he is now trying a different tack. The desert is covered in the spring with wild lupines, flowering legumes that provide nitrogen to the soil. Holmes is working with a desert ecologist to reintroduce selected local lupines and other nitrogen-fixing desert plants into Ciel du Cheval, which he has owned and managed since 1994. Holmes thinks that reintroducing desert plants that were originally there “would be the essence of our terroir. We don't quite know what to call it; we're not conventional or organic and surely not biodynamic, so we tend to call ourselves terroir preservationists.”

Living the dream

At the time of this writing, something more than 30 vineyards and upward of ten wineries populate Red Mountain. Soon, there are likely to be more. In 2007, Col Solare, a partnership between Chateau Ste Michelle and Marchese Piero Antinori, brought an international presence to the AVA when it bought a 40-acre (16ha) vineyard and built a modern winery that, with the exception of its tall Tuscan tower, merges nicely with the land. And there are likely to be more players soon, too. Lack of water rights has limited development, but now the Kennewick Irrigation District—an organization that has water rights to the Yakima River granted by the Federal Bureau of Reclamation and serves four local counties—is bringing water to Red Mountain, opening the way for additional plantings. Of the 4,040 acres (1,635ha) in the AVA, some 2,700 (1,090ha) are suitable for grapes—and with only 1,100 acres (445ha) now planted, the supply of Red Mountain fruit could more than double over the next few years, perhaps lowering the price of the now very costly fruit. As Christian Moueix of Pétrus and Dominus once said when asked about marketing (quoted by Tom Hedges), “Marketing? What marketing? Scarcity is the best marketing.”

Whatever happens, no development is likely to be more creative or more thoroughly researched than Grand Rêve Vineyard—20 acres (8ha) sitting on the lower part of the steep upper slope of Red Mountain, straddling the boundary between glacial flood sediments below and basalt bedrock above—developed by Ryan Johnson and Paul McBride. Johnson dug 57 backhoe pits on the property, leaving them open for a year, walking the vineyard almost daily so that he could directly absorb information from the materials in which the grapes would be growing. He combined this understanding with soil maps and plotted more than 30 small blocks, their boundaries coinciding as closely as possible with what he saw beneath the surface. He matched varieties—eight in all, four typical of Bordeaux and four from the Rhône—to soil type and is training the vines, to the degree that is practical, in the style of their classic plantings. For the time being, Grand Rêve wines are being sourced from Ciel du Cheval and other Red Mountain vineyards, and they are being made by six of Washington's most highly regarded winemakers. Eleven years ago, when Jim Holmes hired Johnson, still in college, to be his vineyard manager, he gave him two cases of Red Mountain wine, from DeLille, Andrew Will, and Quilceda Creek, to taste and learn from. That early experience still informs Johnson's dreams.

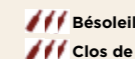
No article on Red Mountain would be complete without mentioning the accomplishments of Alex and Paul Golitzin of Quilceda Creek. Since 2002, their Cabernet Sauvignon—made from grapes from Champoux Vineyard in the Horse Heaven Hills, and Ciel du Cheval, Klipsun, and Tapteil Vineyards on Red Mountain—has received three scores of 100 and two of 99 in *The Wine Advocate*. No other winery in the world has achieved such distinction over such a brief period. Whatever your opinion might be of Robert Parker, Jay Miller (who reviewed the wines), and *The Wine Advocate*,

this recognition surely suggests that Washington wine is ready to take a spot among the world's best, with Red Mountain leading the way. ■

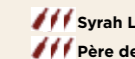
Acknowledgments

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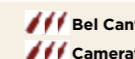
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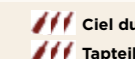
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Grand Ciel Cabernet



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Collaboration Series

Grand Rêve

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Red Mountain



Three Vineyards

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Big Kiona Zinfandel



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Kiona

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Cabernet Sauvignon



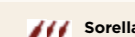
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