



## 2006 Pepper Bridge Vineyard Syrah

*Walla Walla Valley*

**\$40 Winery Retail**

174 cases produced

### **Vineyard Notes**

Pepper Bridge is one of the “blue chip” vineyards of the Walla Walla Valley. Originally planted in 1998 by Norm McKibben (owner of Pepper Bridge winery) there are almost 200 acres planted on these beautiful elevated terrace islands about 10 minutes south of Walla Walla and across the street from our winery. The rich soils are deep silt loam and very consistent throughout this vast property. While generally a cooler site, the Phelps Clone Syrah produces smaller berries that ripen quicker when coupled with lighter than average canopy. This produces a bold, spicy, round wine with more structural backbone than otherwise found in many other vineyards throughout the Valley.

### **Winemaking Notes**

We picked the Pepper Bridge Syrah, during the first weekend of October, a few weeks after Loess and a few weeks before Forgotten Hills. Like Forgotten Hills, this wine is 100% Syrah and was aged entirely in French oak for 15 months plus an additional 11 months in bottle before release. We specifically use a small amount of new Tarransaud barrels for about two months after fermentation, which shapes the mouth feel and refines the tannins. This is classic Syrah that is often overlooked in Walla Walla, but produces a consistently robust wine. Due to a lower yield than expected and our commitment to use only the best grapes, production of this vintage was lower than normal.

### **Tasting Notes**

The dense brown and purple color combination around the rim of the glass gives you the hint of vine maturity. Without the bright purple hue it's getting tougher to distinguish our Syrahs from what you would otherwise think were from the Old World. The aromatics in this wine are pure spice and pepper (no pun intended) and rather closed up, which is deceiving given the complex flavors and structure in the mouth. The acids and tannins cut through the middle of the mouth but don't follow through as much in the finish as Loess or Forgotten Hills, which is very appealing when considering the food pairing opportunities. The rich flavors exude chocolate and dark fruits followed again by the spice and forest brambles. You may even feel as if you are in a butcher shop given the gamy, earthy taste on the long flavorful (not structural) finish. Unlike the 2005 vintage, we feel this wine will drink better young than Loess or Forgotten Hills, but with all the same natural balance will age just as well.