





## FORGOTTEN HILLS VINEYARD

*Walla Walla Valley*

**THE VERTICAL** One of our prized estate vineyards, we've long believed that Forgotten Hills is the most distinct Syrah vineyard site in Washington State. One of three single vineyard Syrahs we produce each year, this wine is the most recognizably unique in its aromatics, structure and profile. To showcase the ultimate essence of *terroir*, and how each year's growing season can impact a wine, we have assembled this three-year vertical from our library wines.

**THE VINEYARD** Forgotten Hills Vineyard was originally planted in 1996 by acclaimed local artist Jeff Hill, on what was his family's original homestead. Just seven acres in size, the vineyard is planted in a north-to-south row orientation, in mostly Syrah. Located on the eastern edge of the Valley, at the base of the Blue Mountains at 950 feet elevation, this vineyard site is generally the coolest part of the appellation and the last to ripen and pick in each vintage.

There are three different soil types in Forgotten Hills: basalt cobblestone, silt loam and sandy loam, which is rare for such a small vineyard. The cobblestones provide excellent drainage and radiate heat, assisting ripening well into the cooler evenings, as temperatures can shift by 40 degrees in the peak summer months. The silt loam enables deep rooting of the vines and use of the indigenous water supply, thereby reducing the need for drip irrigation (in fact, we dry-farmed the vineyard in 2009). The sandy loam also provides excellent soil drainage and helps reduce pest pressures.

With later harvest dates than most vineyards in the Valley, Forgotten Hills produces fruit of low alcohol and sugar levels, with great balance, ripeness and complexity. When not threatened by adverse weather conditions, the wine consistently reflects its *terroir* with an array of flavors and aromas that are unmatched by any other "New World" Syrah we have tasted. Instead, Forgotten Hills is more similar to Northern Rhône Syrah. The end result is a classic earthy Syrah profile of smoked meats, bacon fat, flint, mushrooms and blueberries. Distinction matters and it's the *terroir* of the vineyard that makes it so.



**THE WINE** We intentionally allow for the vineyard's self-expression and intervene as little as possible with the making of the wine. The wine is generally aged for 15-18 months in French oak barrels, and another 9-12 months in bottle before release. We find that our single vineyard Syrahs need time to develop and will age quite gracefully for many years. The oak program is to use mostly used barrels, with only about 10-15% new barrels. We do not want the oak to dominate the *terroir*-driven structure of the wine and have customized our barrel use to each vineyard.

**2005** The vintage was surprisingly uniform due to a consistent growing season while recovering from the arctic freeze of 2004. Overall, the 2005 vintage is about elegance.

**2006** A much warmer growing season than 2005 provided for bigger and riper fruit. With its bigger structure, lingering fruit and fine tannins, this wine is powerful and could use aging and decanting.

**2007** From our perspective, 2007 was the top vintage of the last 10 years in the Walla Walla Valley. The hot and dry early summer gave way to an unexpectedly cool August and September, which enabled complete ripeness without sacrificing acidity or extracting high alcohol levels.