

K VINTNERS & CHARLES SMITH WINES ACCLAIM

Wine Enthusiast Advance Buying Guide, February 2011

2007 Charles Smith Wines Royal City Stoneridge Vineyard Syrah, Columbia Valley 99pts, Cellar Selection

Depth and texture dominate; it's all whole-cluster fruit, aged in new barriques. This fine follow-up to the 2006 features a little more delicacy, with a lovely floral component and some earth. The depth is astonishing in the weight and texture and the way the wine plays out across the palate. The finish never ends: a glorious mix of black cherry, earth, herb, spice, and rock.

2007 Charles Smith Wines Heart Stoneridge Vineyard Syrah, Columbia Valley 98pts, Cellar Selection

This initially tastes like young fruit, herbal, with a lot of stem and flower flavors, but with some heat at 16% alcohol. Nonetheless it's delicious, compact, enormously fruity, focused and flat out amazing. A perfect mix of flesh, fruit, earth, and typicity from this unique vineyard.

2007 Charles Smith Wines Skull Stoneridge Vineyard Syrah, Columbia Valley 97pts, Cellar Selection

Killer juice. It has it all—focus, depth, detail and power. Spice and herb, punch and power, wrapped into a wine with bright, tight berry fruit and layer upon layer of earth, rock and herb. It surpasses the ability of language to describe it. But it needs time—a lot of time.

2007 Charles Smith Wines Old Bones Stoneridge Vineyard Syrah, Columbia Valley 96pts

This displays extraordinary fruit flavors, along with a dense, deep minerality. The flavors seamlessly blend berry, rock, graphite, fresh herb, and light barrel notes. But the fruit! Ripe and rich and aggressively full bodied. Berries piled upon earth and rock, and the flavors linger forever.

2007 K Syrah The Deal Sundance Vineyard, Wahluke Slope 94pts

Blood red, with a center almost black, and a smell like raw meat. A remarkable wine, cropped at well under 2 tons/acre and vinified with roughly 50% whole clusters. Complex and aromatic, with a fruit jelly character that mixes exotic berries and black currants. This is a wine you can dive into and keep exploring; beyond the luscious fruits are layers of herb and cured meats and a vein of graphite.

2007 K Syrah Northridge, Wahluke Slope 94pts

This would qualify as a fruit bomb except it is so impeccably balanced, with fine-grained tannins and enough acidity to keep the lush berry fruit flavors from becoming jammy. Boysenberry, blackberry, black cherry and cassis hold down a concentrated core; the density of this wine is captivating.

2007 K Viognier, Columbia Valley 93pts

All den Hoed grapes—barrel fermented, neutral oak, no malolactic. Very rich, deep and racy, with glorious fruit. Full-bodied and lush without being heavy; it keeps the freshness and minerality, along with a full range of fruits from citrus to stone fruits to melon. Finishes with a lick of white pepper

2007 K Syrah Morrison Lane, Walla Walla Valley 93pts

This has a strong and pure Walla Walla character; the fruit is splayed out broadly across the palate, a luscious mix of strawberries, blueberries, cherries and cassis. There are other veins of flavor running alongside: chocolate, coffee, black olive, licorice, anise and a hint of 5-spice. Big and full and deeply flavorful, this is perhaps the iconic K Syrah.

2007 K Syrah Phil Lane, Walla Walla Valley 93pts

The Phil Lane, from a small vineyard that adjoins the winery, is refined and elegant in the context of the K Vintners Syrah pantheon. This has a generous amount of herb and organic/umami flavor, and the fruit is a component, but not dominant. A contemplative wine, with a subtle weave of herb, earth and berry. The acids are not yet entirely integrated, but that's a minor caveat

2007 K Roma En Chamberlin, Walla Walla Valley 93pts

This is 62% Cabernet Sauvignon and 38% Syrah. The Cab shines here, firm and confident, with sharp edges from spicy herbs. The fruit is polished and silky, and the wine seems to have a sheen over it, an almost gauze-like surface that shimmers and shines.

2007 K Guido, Walla Walla Valley 93pts

This is 80% Sangiovese and 20% Syrah; an overlooked treasure from the LeFore vineyard, one of the original plantings in the Rocks. It is now beginning to show more genuine Sangiovese character as it moves into its second decade. Spicy berry with a strong coffee back, and the juicy acidity of the grape providing the structure. It finishes with a bright cinnamon streak. Delicious.

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2007 K Syrah Milbrandt, Wahluke Slope 92pts, Editor's Choice

Loaded with spice and mint, angular and focused, this extraordinary offering has a core of strikingly deep raspberry fruit. Around that core resonates a shell of minty herb, further defined by sharp tannins with an aromatic sandalwood component. As it breathes in the glass, it opens up further with cured, smoked meat flavors.

2007 K The Creator, Walla Walla Valley 92pts

The Creator is a blend of 60% Cailloux Cabernet Sauvignon, and 40% Morrison Lane Syrah. It's a fascinating mix, with powerful fruit from two iconic Walla Walla vineyards. Neither dominates; the Cailloux Cab is somewhat muted by the Morrison Lane Syrah, which in turn is muted by the Cailloux. The result is a blend that expresses rather than shouts the attributes of each, while remaining balanced and complete.

2007 K The Boy, Walla Walla Valley 92pts

Armada vineyard (Cayuse) Grenache has got the funk, the terroir of the Rocks, and a spicy/herbal component that shines through. The depth and detail are amazing, and there is plenty of the Cayuse funk—it's a love it or hate it flavor, but it is unique and complex.

2007 K Syrah Clifton, Wahluke Slope 92pts

In the aromas are some organic, composty notes, some violets, and plenty of purple fruits. This wine has extra grip in the mouth, drying tannins, quite ripe and polished, and elevated with beautifully ripe fruit. Veins of licorice and black olive run into the finish.

2007 K El Jefe En Chamberlin, Walla Walla Valley 91pts

This is 75% Tempranillo and 25% Cabernet Sauvignon. It's got an unusual structure, and dramatically displays this biodynamic vineyard's funky, herbal, earthy character, with plenty of acidity from the Tempranillo, and a little bit of the tomato leaf character also. A complex, unique, distinctive wine that does not show fruit so much as earth and terroir. It keeps going, adding weight and depth through the midpalate, with a strong tomato component.

2007 K Ovide En Cerise, Walla Walla Valley 91pts

Two-thirds Cabernet and onethird Syrah, this is a creative blend of Cayuse grapes, with the pungent, herbal, earthy character that the En Cerise vineyard delivers in spades. The fruit is a mix that hints at peaches, citrus and more, with an undercurrent of black olive and smoke. But the overriding flavors come from spice, herb, earth and rock.

2007 K Syrah Motor City Kitty (M.C.K.), Washington State 91pts

All Talcott vineyard, but not labeled as such. This shows the alcohol a bit more than the others, but it also has the sculpted tannins, the density and structure, and the intensity of berry-fruit flavors that characterize the entire K Syrah lineup. There is an interesting spicy top note that adds a bit of perfume to the flavor also.

2007 K Syrah Pheasant Vineyard, Wahluke Slope 90pts

This is also a Milbrandt vineyard, but quite different flavors emerge from the other Milbrandt wines. Plenty of black cherry fruit, with a minerality that suggests iron ore. Penetrating, ripe and potent (15% alcohol), yet well balanced and complex, with wild herbs lurking in the background.