

Mouton Noir, Horseshoes & Handgrenades, Red Blend, USA

- Former French Laundry/Per Se Sommelier makes wine for the people
 - Plenty of ripe fruit just on the good side of decadent
 - Fun, food-friendly wines for everyday enjoyment

The Producer

If the path from sommelier to winemaker is becoming more common, Andre Hueston Mack is still in a class of all his own. The former sommelier of The French Laundry and Wine director of Per Se, Andre earned the right to make wine for the 1% but he found his calling in creating excellent wines that everyone can enjoy. Add to that his urban African American vibe, tongue-in-cheek humor and formidable graphic design talent, and you have the makings of his brilliantly conceived, crafted and packaged Mouton Noir wines. From outstanding vineyards in Oregon's Willamette Valley and further north, these are "serious wines that don't take themselves too seriously." Andre has developed a cult following with his t-shirts de-rigueur at any sommelier gathering and his wines on cutting edge lists from coast to coast.

Andre's passion for wine led him to leave his desk job in his native San Antonio to pursue a career as a sommelier. His type-A personality drove him to win the Chaine des Rotisseurs Best Young Sommelier in America competition, which brought him to the attention of Thomas Keller. After a successful stint as a sommelier at The French Laundry, Andre was chosen to head the wine team responsible for opening Keller's restaurant in New York, Per Se. At Per Se, Andre built the core of the 1800 label Grand Award winning list and hosted many high-end collector dinners.

He had always wanted to make wine and got his chance when he was recruited to be one of the initial sommelier consultants at the Evening Land project in Oregon. After making some Pinot Noir from the highly regarded Seven Springs vineyard, Andre found his calling. Instead of serving the elite few, Andre wanted to make wines that were accessible to everyone. He started in 2007 making a few hundred cases for famous New York restaurants, and used his relationships to source some excellent vineyards to make wines at affordable price points.

Mouton Noir is considered a micro-negociant ("Garage d'Or") with a stable lineup of vineyards along with the ability to nimbly acquire premium fruit. All of his wines are Oregon based with an eye towards being good companions with food as well as being fun and approachable for novices and experienced drinkers alike. Andre's sense of humor comes through in his labels including Oregogne, Horseshoes and Handgrenades and OPP (Other People's Pinot). Mouton Noir now produces over 20,000 cases.

Andre travels over 200 days a year sharing his wines and doing education at many food and wine festivals worldwide. Andre is truly a pied piper of wine leading the next generation of wine drinkers in pursuit of the good stuff.

The Wine

They say close only counts in Horseshoes and Handgrenades, well this is certainly true when it came to designating an appellation for this wine. Oregon and Washington are neighbors across the Columbia River but they share little in their diverse winegrowing regions. Far from the cool wet hillsides of the Willamette Valley Southern Oregon excels in warmer climate varieties such as Tempranillo and Syrah which go into the blend. Add to this some outstanding Cabernet Sauvignon and Merlot from Washington's famed Klipsun vineyard. The result is a wine of the Northwest but not of a specific site or even state. Fortunately, it's close enough to be a delicious blend that will make friends wherever the cork is pulled. The wine shows plenty of ripe voluptuous fruit that stays just on the good side of decadent. This is an ideal everyday wine or backyard BBQ red.



Region: Southern Oregon, Horse Heaven Hills, WA

Appellations: American red wine

Vineyards: various sources, Klipsun Vineyard, WA

Altitude: varying

Soil: loam and loess

Alcohol: 13.7%

Varietals: 64% Syrah, 19% Merlot, 9% Cab Sauv, 9% Tempranillo

Vinification: 100% hand-picked and destemmed into stainless steel, short cold soak

Aging: neutral oak aging, 10 mos.

Tasting Notes: Cherry pits and leather whips!

We provide great restaurants and retailers with wines they are proud to serve and keep their guests coming back for more.