



Martin Clubb



## L'ECOLE NO. 41

REGIONAL

This is L'Ecole No. 41's sixth *Winery of the Year* honor, coming just one year shy of its 25th anniversary. It's a tribute to both the consistency of the brand and its winemaker, Marty Clubb. Clubb continues to produce some of the most impressive wines in the Columbia Valley, from Washington's best semillons to a first-rate Columbia Valley cabernet. Even so, when it comes to tributes, Clubb defers to Baker and Jean Ferguson, his mother- and father-in-law, who founded L'Ecole in Lowden, just outside Walla Walla.

After Baker Ferguson died in 2005 (Jean had passed a few years earlier), Clubb planned a special one-time bottling from the 2004 vintage in their memory. He didn't produce *Perigee* and *Apogee*, his iconic Walla Walla bottlings, in 2004 since much of the vintage was wiped out in two freezes. Clubb's local fruit sources, *Seven Hills* and *Pepper Bridge*, were decimated, so he looked to sites outside Walla Walla for the Ferguson commemorative bottling. "It turned out that a lot of these were the older vineyards like *Sagemoor* and *Bacchus* and *Dionysus*," he says, vineyards that Ferguson himself contracted for L'Ecole more than 20 years ago. In that way, the winter disaster rendered his commemorative bottling that much more meaningful. It stands this year as L'Ecole's solitary reserve bottling.

The Ferguson Commemorative blend also includes fruit from the *Klipsun* vineyard on *Red Mountain*. It's darker and more powerful than a typical L'Ecole wine, whose reserves, *Apogee* and *Perigee*, never fail to play up Walla Walla's inimitable leafy, earthy elements. But through the supple, fresh plum flavor there is a kind of gravitas—a fitting memorial for a winery founder on the eve of a quarter century. —P.J.C.

### TOP-SCORING WINES

- 93 '04 Columbia Valley Ferguson Commemorative Reserve Red \$45 (6/07)
- 90 '04 Columbia Valley Cabernet Sauvignon \$30 (6/07)
- 90 '05 Walla Walla Valley Seven Hills Vineyard Semillon \$20 (4/07)

Founded: 1983 Winemakers: Mike Sharon; Martin Clubb, Managing Winemaker Viticulturist: Martin Clubb, with Chris Banek (Seven Hills) Acres owned: 175 Annual production: 35,000 cases Estate grown: 75% Owners: Martin and Megan Clubb Known for: Classic Walla Walla red wines and iconic semillon Location: Lowden, WA Website: lecole.com