



**CURRENT MIDDLETON FAMILY RELEASES**

**2010 Cadaretta SBS**

A succulent blend of sauvignon blanc and sémillon

**2008 Cadaretta Windthrow**

A ripe and complex southern Rhône-style blend

**2008 Cadaretta Syrah**

Deep boysenberry fruit highlighted with black olive and dusty coffee

**2007 Cadaretta Springboard Red**

A limited-production Bordeaux-style reserve

**2007 Cabernet Sauvignon**

#92 in Paul Gregutt's Top 100 for 2010

**UNIQUE WALLA WALLA SITE SHOULD MAKE FOR UNIQUE WINES**

On a perfect summer morning a few weeks ago, I joined several journalists, PR people, geologist Kevin Pogue, winemaker Brian Rudin and owner Rick Middleton at the Southwind vineyard, a new planting high in the hills on the Oregon side of the Walla Walla Valley. We were there to see a particular site, rather forgettably named the F Block, that had everyone buzzing with excitement.

Cadaretta is the Walla Walla project of Middleton Family Wines, whose brands also include Buried Cane and Clayhouse. Founded in 2005, Cadaretta had made its early releases entirely from purchased grapes. But at Southwind we got a good look not only at the future of this winery but at one of the most unusual and potentially brilliant vineyard sites in the entire Northwest.

Standing on the hilltop, near a rectangular glass "house" that hosts special events and wine tastings, we could see almost the entire valley spread out below us. The Cadaretta site encompasses 337 acres, of which 22 were planted in 2008 and first harvested last fall. The F Block, slightly higher at 1,350 feet, is just above the high point of the massive Missoula floods. As a result, its soils are weathered basalt, with just a thin layer of windblown silt.

This is exceedingly rare. Geologist Pogue, who is consulting on the project, explains that these F Block soils are "a more mineralogically complex mixture of wind-deposited silt and weathered basalt." The advantage for the grapevines, he adds, is that "the roots will eventually find their way into the underlying fractured basalt bedrock. Although it will not be possible to actually 'taste the basalt' in the wine, the unique chemistry of the soil should have a significant impact on the flavor and aroma profiles of these wines."

The first eight acres in this new site were planted this past spring, half to syrah and half to cabernet sauvignon. Nearby neighbors, all high-altitude plantings only recently established, include JM Cellars' Margaret's vineyard, Drew Bledsoe's McQueen vineyard, several Watermill sites, Seven Hills, and the vast development known as Sevein, a partnership of several of the valley's most prestigious vintners.

Winemaker Rudin points out that once the land is ripped, the soil ameliorated with cover crops and the new vines planted, the irrigation "turns on the soil" – soil that has previously been classified as suitable only for grazing cattle. "We can explore new soil types that would not be planted in Europe, where irrigation is forbidden."

Only a tiny fraction of the existing Columbia Valley vineyards are planted in soils that contain basalt-derived minerals. Will this new ground ultimately yield complexities previously unavailable? We'll just have to wait and see. But the promise is there, along with the commitment of time, money and talent to see if it can be fulfilled.

-PAUL GREGUTT, OCTOBER 1, 2011

MIDDLETON FAMILY WINES

