



# Marginalia

## 2018 Red Wine

**70% Nebbiolo and  
30% Syrah from Breezy Slope Vineyard  
Walla Walla Valley AVA  
264 bottles produced**

**23.9° Brix  
pH 3.11  
TA 9.5 g/L  
14.5% abv**

The 2018 Marginalia Red Wine comes from an untended block at Breezy Slope Vineyard that was about 70% Nebbiolo and 30% Syrah. The block was replanted to 100% Syrah in the spring of 2019. In retrospect I wish I had taken a contract on this block, but the quality potential was not evident soon enough for me to step in and make that offer. I picked the grapes for this wine with my friend Paul on a freezing, foggy morning in late November. The grapes were firm with ice, but not frozen solid. The stems had been shredded by frost over the previous week, so the grapes had to be destemmed at the winery (stems give up some odd flavors after a frost, and I've found it best to just exclude them in such cases). This was a late pick, but the block was untended, so per-vine yields were pretty high, and ripeness wasn't excessive.

This wine is experimental in several ways. First of all, the acidity at harvest was shocking. Since it was a late pick, there was pretty high potassium that helped tame the acidity during fermentation and aging, but still, success with this wine was an important validation for me in pursuing wines structured by acidity more than tannin. This is also a true field blend in that the Syrah and Nebbiolo were mixed together randomly in the vineyard and we made no effort to separate them in picking or processing. Finally, because this wine had such firm acidity, I thought it would be a good time to experiment with oak; high acid wines tend to be able to integrate more oak flavor than low acid wines. In this case I experimented with adding staves of Oregon white oak (*Quercus Garryana*) to a neutral barrel for the duration of aging. The resulting oak signature is very present, but to my palate, not excessive.

This wine definitely lies outside the stylistic space of Big Red Wine. It is still fairly high in alcohol because of the late harvest date, but flavors are not excessively ripe or jammy. Pigmentation is not especially high, and acid dominates tannin as the structuring element of the wine. The oak steered the fruit toward a darker expression than the wine would otherwise have had, but the red-fruited Nebbiolo still shows up prominently. There's enough tannin here that I tend to serve this wine with higher protein meals, and tend to veer away from spicy foods.

The 2018 Red Wine is not available through the winery, but may still be available in limited quantities for wholesale customers through Odyssey Selections.