



LONG SHADOWS  
DISTINGUISHED WINERIES & VINEYARDS

## **The Benches Vineyard Overview**

The Benches is an extraordinary vineyard of beauty and scope carved out of a cliff along the Columbia River. Formerly known as Wallula Vineyard, Allen Shoup, Agustin Huneus, Sr. and a small group of investors purchased the site in March 2008 from veteran Columbia Valley grape growers Bill and Andy Den Hoed. Brothers Bill and Andy, who now serve as The Benches' vineyard managers, began planting this rugged, virgin site in 1998, along with their father Andy Sr.

Located on a steep, south-facing slope 15 miles south of Tri-Cities in the southeast corner of Washington State's acclaimed Horse Heaven Hills AVA, The Benches is currently planted with nearly 850 acres of vines. As well-known for its jaw-dropping grandeur as its award-winning wines, the site simply "must be seen to believe," as one prominent wine critic noted.

Sculpted out of the earth by the famous Missoula floods that raced down the Columbia River during the last Ice Age, the surging water left a dramatic series of hillside benches in its wake. Rising 1,350 above sea level at its crown, the vineyard's rugged terrain quickly drops more than 1,000 feet to the edge of the Columbia River. With the mighty Columbia serving as a massive insulator, heat accumulates rapidly in the bottom sections of the property that wind along the contour of the river for four miles. These lower slopes are substantially warmer (3,200 annual heat units, on average) than the upper divisions of the vineyard (2,800 annual heat units, on average) setting the stage for planting and cultivating more than a dozen grape varieties, all thriving on this single site because of the vineyard's diverse mesoclimates. As a general rule, red grapes are planted in the lower borders of the site; white grapes dominate the higher elevations.

Deep, free-draining, stratified soils provide the foundation for the vines. Ancient flood materials are found in the lower rooting zone, while a diverse collection of the Columbia Valley's famous wind-blown soils comprise the upper layers, adding to the site's seemingly endless combination of microclimates.

Sustainable farming practices include use of cover crops to reduce erosion and build soil life; compost used to reduce fertilizers and improve soils; and a state-of-the-art irrigation system designed to conserve water and promote the health of the vine.

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