

# CUTTING EDGE SELECTIONS

✧HAND-CRAFTED WINES✧

## L'Ecole № 41

As with every industry, the wine business has been heavily effected by the recent economic downturn. Most consumers have less discretionary income, and as such, demand a very high quality to price ratio with every purchase. National sales statistics show no decrease in overall wine consumption, thus far, but there has been a definite move on the part of consumers to both lower price points and high value wines.

Now it is no secret that we at Cutting Edge have the best selection of outstanding wines from around



*Marty Clubb, Owner*

the world, that we are able to bring to market at extremely attractive price points (Protocolo, Wrongo Dongo, Vina Borgia, Andre Brunel, Domaine Cassagnoles, Cartlidge & Browne, and Coyote Creek... just to name a few!). However, value (quality/price), extends to higher price points as well, provided the ratio is large, even disproportionate. If you are going to stray in to the \$20-30 range, the wine better be really good, in fact in this economy it needs to be downright special! This, in my humble opinion, is where L' Ecole № 41 comes in to the picture. To my mind this little firm has been quietly growing and vinting some of the best and most expressive wines from Washington State. Handmade, raised with care and drenched in terroir, L' Ecole № 41 is value personified, as one would have to spend a great deal more to find wine of comparable quality.

The winery was founded in 1983 by Jean and Baker Ferguson as a little retirement project. They purchased an old school house (you guessed it... in district № 41) in what was informally known as Frenchtown (Lowden), just west of Walla Walla in Washington State. The area was settled by French Canadians in the early 1800's, thus the name "Frenchtown." Since the winery was to be

housed in an former school house (district 41) in *Frenchtown*, they decided to call their winery L'Ecole (school in French) № 41. The label was designed serendipitously, shortly there after, when an eight-year-old visitor to the winery left the Bakers his artistic rendering of the facility.

L'Ecole quickly established a reputation for producing excellent dry Semillon. In fact, the Fergusons were among the first west coast wineries to grow and vint this grape. In 1989, the Ferguson's daughter, Megan along with her husband, Marty Clubb, took over operation of the winery. They expanded their vineyards to include the production of the first Seven Hills Vineyard Merlot and the first Pepper Bridge Vineyard Apogee (Bordeaux Blend). In 1997 L'Ecole became a partner in Seven Hills Vineyard, along with Leonetti Cellar and Pepper Bridge Winery. L'Ecole is now the largest producer from the famed Seven Hills Vineyard. Today, L'Ecole is widely recognized as one of the best producers in Washington State, regularly garnering high praise from consumers and critics alike.