

WINE RECOMMENDATION

**DiStefano Wines****2002 Merlot
(Columbia Valley)**

Washington State Merlots run the gamut from light and fruity to deep, dark and brooding with formidable tannins most likely from time in heavily toasted sweet American oak. Often I find a mocha/blueberry character as well. This wine is somewhere in the middle. Slightly hazy, deeply saturated ruby, and moderately viscous, the wine has aromas of earth, char, cedar, chocolate-covered raisin, stewed fruit, cherry jam, and a sweet Pinot-Noir like perfume. The entry is round and delicate. Dark berry, raisin, and molasses notes come out on the palate along with chewy oak tannins. The finish is long and spicy. This is the kind of wine that really demands food. Dishes such as lamb-stuffed eggplant, chicken mole,

pappardelle with duck ragout, veal chops, Gouda or a smoked provolone come to mind.

The fruit came from two sources, the Roza Hills, and the Chandler Reach vineyards. It is blended with 3% Cabernet Sauvignon and was aged for 24 months in French oak. Only 571 cases were produced. Owner and winemaker Mark Newton and his wife Donna DiStefano run this small winery in Woodinville. She oversees special events. He cut his winemaking teeth in sparkling wine. Now they concentrate on Bordeaux varietals and blends.

Reviewed August 1, 2007 by [Catherine Fallis](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [DiStefano Wines](#)

Vintage: 2002

Wine: Merlot

Appellation: [Columbia Valley](#)

Grapes: Merlot (97%), Cabernet Sauvignon (3%)

Price: \$32.00

THE REVIEWER**Catherine Fallis**

Founder and President of Planet Grape LLC, a company committed to bringing the joy of wine, food, and good living into the lives of everyday people, Catherine is creator of the "grape goddess guides to good living," a series of books, television presentations, seminars, and e-learning programs. The fifth woman in the world to become a Master Sommelier, grape goddess Catherine Fallis is still very much down-to-earth.