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Northwest Big Reds Club™ for September 2007

Club Selections:

Zanzibar Sandra Red 05

Trust Syrah 05

Two new "Indie" wineries making wine from Washington State grapes are featured this month in our Northwest Big Reds Club. Washington State is positively awash in new wineries. Most are small and focused on high end, limited quantity big red wines -- the bigger the better. It's a challenge to sort through the literally dozens of new wineries offering red wines at prices as high as \$100 or more. We spend a lot of time tasting and searching for the standouts. Zanzibar and Trust Cellars are our finds from the summer 2007 "Big Red" releases.

Trust Cellars

Steve Brooks, in his former life as a journalist for CNN, got to know a thing or two about wine because he traveled and he drank it "all over the world." "I ate out a lot," he said. "The highlight of any exhausting, miserably long work day was the quest for the best local food. Many a meal with lots of local wine, if available, was shared with colleagues as we swapped stories of our past adventures. I've always associated those good times with food and drink. In short, I became a foodie."

Brooks realized, nearly twenty years into his life as a journalist, that he wasn't very happy. He was always on the road. Brooks and his family brainstormed for alternative lifestyles. Some of the most appealing ventures involved food and wine. He and his wife made a huge life change, moving to Walla Walla in 2001 to start a winery.



View from the Trust vineyard

Brooks arrived in Walla Walla with a lot to learn. He knew grape varieties and was skilled with food and wine pairings, but he had to learn the intricacies of winemaking and get some hands-on experience. He set to work right away, taking classes at the Center for Enology and Viticulture in Walla Walla. Over the past five years, he's built up a strong wine work resume with time spent in the cellars of Walla Walla Vintners, Northstar, Long Shadows, Basel Cellars, VaPiano and Chateau Rollat.

The first Trust Cellars vintage was 2005, for which Brooks produced a Syrah. Out of 2006, came a Riesling, Cabernet Franc Rose and a Semillon Ice Wine.

Trust recently relocated to a new facility, located at (no kidding) 1050 Merlot Drive, in the middle of Saint Clare Vineyard. Brooks is currently making around 900 cases a year and, he said, "We have plans to

Zanzibar "Sandra" Red 05 \$54

Wine Spectator 93 points:

"Zanzibar Sandra Horse Heaven Hills - Velvety and generous. A plush mouthful of blueberry, plum, cream and dark chocolate flavors that echo through the long, resonant finish. Strikes a superb balance between rich fruit, savory side notes and good depth. Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc and Syrah. Best from 2009 through 2017. 425 cases made." HS

This wine is named after Keirouza's former wife Sandra, who encouraged him to become a winemaker. Sandra is made from 75% Cabernet Sauvignon grapes, 13% Cabernet Franc and 11% Syrah from Alder Creek Vineyards in the Columbia Valley, in the Horse Heaven Hills appellation. Received 90 points from Wine Spectator for the 2004 and 93 points for the 2005 vintage.



From the Winery:

A blend of 75% Cabernet Sauvignon, 13% Cabernet Franc and 11% Syrah from Columbia valley vineyards. Grapes are hand harvested and undergo small batch whole berry fermentation and extended maceration to ensure the development of remarkable and supple structure and body.

Malolactic fermentation is completed in 100% new French oak barrels, where the wine continues to age and mature for 15 months until it is bottled. It will then be cellared for the next 6 months before it is released.



Trust Syrah 05 \$30

Complex scents of black cherry, cassis, cola, saffron, and hints of a foetal component, possibly derived from a bit of Viognier in the blend. Flavors are perceived through a rich, viscous mouthfeel. The wine is huge, with lots of body- black fruit is joined by floral, spice, licorice notes. Despite its bigness, the wine finishes with a very refreshing sense and a lively acidity.

Winemaker Steve Brooks says: "All the lots that went into the 2005 Syrah were punched down by hand during fermentation. They all went to dryness on the skins and then were pressed to tank and allowed to settle overnight before barreling down. Malolactic fermentation took place in barrel. Most of the wine was aged in older barrels with only 12.5% of the blend being aged in new French oak. There is also a little bit of Cabernet

inch up production every yearâ€”but nothing drastic.â€

Brooks uses fruit from a long list of Washington vineyards, and he said he finds that, â€œEach one brings something to the table when itâ€™s time to put a blend together. I tend to favor hotter sites for Cabernet and cooler sites for Syrah, but I always keep an open mind and try to taste as many different spots as I can.â€

In general, Brooks likes to keep his style streamlined. â€œThe wine is an expression of the vineyard,â€ Brooks said. â€œI try not to cover that up, so nothing heavy handed. I just let nature play out.â€

Sauvignon (12.5%) in the blend, which adds a velvety mouth-feel to the finished wine. Dried black cherry, espresso and vanilla on the nose.â€



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