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Echolands 2022 Walla Walla Valley Cabernet Franc Walla Walla, Washington

About the wine: “In truth, all wine is an echo of the landscape, of the vines planted there and the sound that they make in the form of their fruits. We cannot create qualities that are not there in the grapes.” Echolands Winery was created in 2018 by two Kansas City residents, Brad Bergman and Doug Frost MS, MW, who believed in the Walla Walla Valley AVA’s ability to offer a distinctive style of wine. Their goal is to craft responsibly produced wines that reflect the potential for elegance and balance from this singular place. They are among the first in the valley to harvest and their team begins things the right way: by toasting each other with several bottles of Champagne! They produce wines from Syrah, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Petit Verdot, Grenache - making wines that are balanced and textured. They aim to echo what the land generously gives them by promoting environmental stewardship and biodiversity in everything they do, including wastewater capture, composting, and a sustainable barrel cellar. Word is that their tasting room is the hottest tasting room in Walla Walla! One of the hidden gems of the Walla Walla Valley, Cabernet Franc is a grape we believe deserves greater focus in the region. This elegant wine is 83% Cabernet Franc and 17% Merlot.

About the Region: Echolands is located in the Walla Walla Valley, an American Viticultural Area (AVA) located within Washington state and extending partly into the northeastern corner of Oregon. The wine region is entirely included within the larger Columbia Valley AVA, and hosts over 140 wineries! Walla Walla Valley was an early leader in the beginnings of the Washington wine industry when the town of Walla Walla was founded by the Hudson's Bay Company as a trading post in the 1840s. French fur trappers settled in a small town outside the city known as Frenchtown and began planting grapes. Cabernet Sauvignon is the most well-known and widely planted grape in the area, followed by Merlot, Syrah, Sangiovese, and Cabernet Franc. The area receives minimal rainfall and thus relies on irrigation. The 200-day-long growing season is characterized by hot days and cool nights. The valley is prone to sudden shifts in temperature as cold air comes down from the Blue Mountains and is trapped in the Snake and Columbia river valleys. The valley is beautiful, although entering

Walla Walla from the north (via Spokane), your first view is of a state prison! Your writer loves visiting Walla Walla and highly recommends a trip!

Tasting Notes: Echolands Winery's 2022 Cabernet Franc from the Blue Mountain Vineyard in Walla Walla Valley is an elegantly structured wine. It offers multilayered flavors of boysenberry, forest floor, floral notes, and stone, rich and medium-bodied and with refined tannins. Crafted in a graceful and understated style that focuses on beauty over power, this wine is approachable now but will develop further complexity with time. So balanced, so smooth! We say drink it now and buy another!

Food Pairing: Pair this Walla Walla Cabernet Franc with foods that complement its fruity, herbal, and peppery notes, such as grilled meats, burgers, roast pork, sausages, eggplant, and herbal dishes. The wine's medium-bodied nature and elegant tannins also make it a versatile match for barbecue and pizza, while its acidity can balance tomato-based dishes. This is a perfect Montana fall pairing for smoked meats! Try this.... consider herb-roasted chicken with root vegetables. This dish highlights the wine's versatility by creating a bridge between the aromatic herbs and savory root vegetables, complementing the wine's herbaceous notes and balanced acidity.