

## Winemaker, Brennon Leighton:

Great wine must be embodied and actualized by great moxie. Brennon Leighton, our winemaker, has broken the mold. Raised by artists and hippies in Santa Cruz, California, Brennon was born to rebel, but struggled to find an appropriate venue for his artistic impulses. Dodging the option of becoming a conservative or conformist, he instead choose to dally in a punk rock band where he was rescued by a family friend and put to work busing tables in a fine dining establishment.

Most people with a passion for the vine have a "wine epiphany." For Brennon it was the '85 Cheval Blanc that the General Manager of the restaurant graciously shared with him. He had never smelled anything so exotic and beautiful, and one taste filled his chest and face with an overwhelming sense of wonderment and instantaneous understanding. No great surprise, he wanted to experience this feeling again and again. When he asked his manager about becoming a wine steward he was met with a resounding "No," but as consolation he was allowed to stock the cellar and train under the current wine steward.

Time and a few subsequent epiphanies and his interest became an obsession, and his obsession blossomed into a full-blown passion for wine – he knew he had to become immersed in the wine industry. Brennon mulled over the idea of becoming a sommelier or a Master of wine, but ultimately, recognized his love demanded he labor knee-deep in the physical process of making wine. At 26, he went back to school, earning his degree in Viticulture and Enology at the University of California, Davis. He feels blessed to have worked with so many fine winemakers, at Efestē, and at Chateau Ste. Michelle where he produced the award winning wine *Eroica*. *Seattle Magazine* recognized Brennon as the "Winemaker to Watch" in their 2009 Washington Wine Awards.

## Philosophy:

EFESTĒ's philosophy is "*great wines are made in the vineyard.*" We have the marvelous fortune of working with some of the premier vineyards in the world. *We use old world techniques and new world fruit, guaranteeing the best of both realms: earthy concentration and elegance from the methods, paired with power and brightness from the berries.* We work primarily with old vines ensuring the maturity, desired for power and concentration, while maintaining grace and elegance. We use 100% native fermentation with no fining and no filtering to extract sultry earth tones without overpowering the fruit flavors produced in the vineyards.

EFESTĒ believes that terrior, "a sense of place" and a minimalist approach to winemaking make the best wines. We take the approach of wine monitoring rather than winemaking. An integral value at EFESTĒ is to honor the beauty of art – the craft of winemaking included – and great artists such as Picasso, Van Gogh, Beethoven, and Shakespeare.

A powerful facet of all memorable works of art is in the exquisiteness that arises from its inherent imperfections. So too "great wines are perfectly flawed" to create an identity and lasting impression.

*After taking a sneak preview of the 2006 and 2007 reds from barrel, we can honestly say that Efesté is a winery to follow.* Dan McCarthy, Wine Merchant, April 2008.