

2003 Abracadabra	Columbia Valley	\$20.00	87 points
2004 Byzance	Columbia Valley	\$30.00	89 points
2003 L'Etalon	Yakima Valley	\$30.00	91+ points
2005 Oriana	Yakima Valley	\$24.00	90 points
2001 Solesce	Yakima Valley	\$58.00	91+ points
2003 Tuttorosso	Yakima Valley	\$30.00	90 points

Brian Carter, the long-time winemaker at Apex, is a big believer in the art of blending. In each vintage he produces one white blend and four red blends, each with its own proprietary name. There is also a sixth wine, Abracadabra, for declassified fruit. In all, the winery produces 4000 cases in a given vintage.

The **Oriana** is composed of 61% Viognier, 25% Riesling, and 14% Rousanne. The wine spent 7 months on the lees in neutral oak. Light gold-colored; it has an attractive perfume encompassing floral elements (especially honeysuckle), mineral, melon, peach and apricot. Crisp on the palate with very good concentration, this refreshing wine would marry well with a variety of Pacific Northwest seafood. Drink this tasty wine over the next 1-2 years.

The reds begin with the 2003 **Tuttorosso**, Carter's take on a Super-Tuscan. The wine is a blend of 64% Sangiovese, 27% Cabernet Sauvignon, and 9% Syrah aged for 19 months in French oak, 40% new. Dark ruby-colored, it has a fragrant bouquet of tasty cassis and black cherry. The wine is made in a racy, slightly austere style with bright acidity and light tannin. The tasty fruit leads to a long, pure finish. Give this elegant effort 2-3 years in the cellar and drink through 2017.

The 2004 **Byzance** is Carter's interpretation of Chateauneuf-du-Pape. Made up of 55% Grenache, 24% Syrah, and 21% Mourvedre, the wine is dark ruby with a distinctly Provencal nose of garrique, damp earth, spice box, and black cherry. Full-bodied and round on the palate with plenty of spicy fruit, the wine has excellent balancing acidity, good length and the structure to evolve for 3-5 years. Drink it through 2022.

The 2003 **L'Etalon** (the stallion) is a Bordeaux-styled blend of 56% Cabernet Sauvignon, 20% Merlot, 20% Cabernet Franc, and 4% Petit Verdot. It spent 22 months in French oak, 40% new. Dark ruby-colored, it emits scents of pain grille', scorched earth, pencil lead, black currants, and blackberry. The wine has excellent intensity in the slightly austere style favored by the winemaker along with attractive, spicy flavors, excellent depth, and the structure to evolve for 4-6 years. This well-made wine should drink well through 2030.

The winery's flagship, the 2001 **Solesce** is 47% Cabernet Sauvignon, 38% Merlot, 12% Cabernet Franc, and 3% Malbec aged 28 months in French oak, 40% new. Purple-colored, it offers an expressive array of smoky oak, scorched earth, clove, espresso, and blackberry. Supple-textured with a slightly austere

personality, the wine has excellent spicy flavors, firm tannins, and excellent length. This wine demands 3-5 years of further bottle age and should provide pleasure through 2030.

The last offering is the 2003 Abracadabra, a second label with declassified fruit from the proprietary bottlings. Composed of 35% Cabernet Sauvignon, 29% Syrah, 12% Petit Verdot, 12% Merlot, 6% Sangiovese, and 6% Malbec, this wine spent 16 months in 30% new French oak. The wine is clearly in the house style but is more tannic and austere and with less breadth on the palate than the top cuvees. Nevertheless, it is a very good wine with earth, graphite, spice box, blueberry, black cherry, and cassis aromas and flavors. The wine offers considerable complexity and length and is a very good value in quality red wine.

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