

**Terra Blanca Vintners****2002 Merlot, Estate Vineyard
(Red Mountain)**

Located in the southeastern portion of the Yakima Valley, the Red Mountain sub-AVA is one of the state's smallest and has only about a dozen wineries. Those wineries are making a name for themselves with reds, including Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot, Cabernet Franc, Syrah and Sangiovese. In the early 1990s, well before the appellation was awarded (2001), Keith Pilgrim purchased 300 acres here, at the confluence of the Yakima and Columbia Valleys, below the Horse Heaven Hills. Named after calcium carbonate dropped off thousands of years ago in the soils, Terra Blanca is today an 80-acre vineyard and 30,000 case production winery. Pilgrim is owner/winemaker.

Hazy, opaque ruby and viscous, this Merlot has aromas of cherry, plum, cinnamon, sweet vanilla bean, smoke, and a Crozes-Hermitage – like hint of burnt rubber. It is medium-bodied and silky on the palate, with balanced acid, oak, and alcohol, and has notes of stewed tomato, plum, and cassis. This is a refreshing style of Merlot for Washington, where so many go for the sweet, almost blueberry-like fruit and then doll it up with well-toasted American oak. It is not at all what one might expect, but a pleasant surprise.

Reviewed May 28, 2007 by [Catherine Fallis](#).

THE WINE

Winery: [Terra Blanca Vintners](#)

Vineyard: Estate Vineyard

Vintage: 2002

Wine: Merlot

Appellation: [Red Mountain](#)

Grape: Merlot

Price: \$20.00

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.