



WINEMAKER PROFILE

RICHARD FUNK, WINEMAKER/OWNER

Richard Funk is the Owner and Winemaker for Saviah Cellars, which he founded in 2000 in Walla Walla. Richard moved to the area in 1991 with a degree in Microbiology from Montana State University and he quickly developed an interest in the small, yet to be discovered wine industry in this quiet southeastern Washington town.



As an Environmental Health Specialist with the Walla Walla County Health Department, he became acquainted with the local wineries as he helped them work through the complex issues of water quality and wastewater management. During those early years he developed a rapport with a number of local winemakers, who helped him get his start in the industry. The winery's first commercial vintage was just 300 cases, and the winery has since grown to produce 27,000 cases. The winery produces a broad portfolio of wines, with a focus on Richard's personal favorite, savory Syrahs. The fruit for his Syrah comes mainly from the winery's Estate vineyards in The Rocks District of Milton-Freewater. The vineyards are certified sustainable through LIVE and Salmon Safe.

A self-taught winemaker, Rich has an extensive background in chemistry and microbiology. His science background complements his winemaking approach and his understanding of the critical processes involved in making exceptional wine. Rich also has a keen interest in soil science and has analyzed the soils of the Walla Walla valley extensively allowing him to understand the important relationship between fruit quality and terroir.

Rich has assisted several wineries with their start-up processes and served as the winemaker for Watermill Winery from 2006-2009, àMaurice winery from 2005-2006, and also as a consulting winemaker for several new wineries. One of his favorite projects is working with Top Chef winner Stephanie Izard on wine for her Girl & The Goat restaurant in Chicago.

Rich is known for a great sense of humor and enjoys the outdoors and spending time with his family. In the spring you may find him searching the Blue Mountains near Walla Walla for the elusive morel mushroom and in the fall he traverses the backcountry of Oregon and Montana in search of the equally elusive wapiti and Blue Mountain porcini mushrooms.