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Zerba Cellars Wines Take a Walk on the Wild Side

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Added Note: Zerba Cellars 2003 Wild Thing received a gold medal at the Tri-Cities Wine Festival on November 12, 2005

Although they're located just a quarter mile south of the Washington-Oregon border in Milton-Freewater, Zerba Cellars is part of the Walla Walla appellation and many of their grapes are from Washington vineyards.

Despite the disarray of a tasting room currently under construction, Marilyn Zerba was an amiable and helpful host during a recent visit, treating me to a number of current releases that were all quite good.

I really enjoyed the 2003 Wild Thing Red Wine, a blend of Syrah, Merlot, Cabernet and Cabernet Franc. The wine is loaded with dark fruit, spicy notes and subtle oak flavors. At about \$19 a bottle, it's one of the more competitively priced red wines from this region. Ample supply and the amusing picture of the grinning zebra on the label make this wine a no-brainer for stocking up on.

Also available and worth a try are the 2004 Viognier (about \$19), with creamy peach nuances and the 2004 Lewis Vineyard Chardonnay (about \$15), a slightly tropical, lightly oaked wine that's a steal at this price.

Zerba Cellars wines can be found at Compass Wines in Anacortes and can also be ordered by phoning the winery at (541) 938-9463.