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2009 Sleight Of Hand Syrah Levitation

Sleight of Hand's 2009 Syrah Levitation – sourced from Lewis and Les Collines vineyards – offers a distinctively smoky nose suggestive of tallow and charred red meat. Expressing itself well below the bar line, this tannic, brooding bottling displays its dark berry fruit with a decidedly bitter edge. Impressively persistent, it may well just need a couple of years to become more engaging, and I can't imagine it fatiguing inside of six. Given Sleight of Hand's garish magic- and rock-themed labels, one might be tempted to imagine that winemaker Trey Busch and his partners, Jerry and Sandy Solomon – whom he met by chance in 2002 – have such a sense of whimsy, humor, and visual artistic sophistication that the ambitious pursuit of serious wine quality might be less of a focus. One taste reveals that such a supposition would be entirely wrong-headed. The Sleight of Hand...

- David Schildknecht (December, 2012)

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2009 Sleight Of Hand The Archimage

A 50-50 Merlot-Cabernet Franc bottling whose 2010 rendition won't be released until next spring and Busch preferred not to show me until next summer, the Sleight of Hand 2009 The Archimage is sourced from several geographically diverse sites including Seven Hills and Red Mountain vineyards. Lightly-cooked elderberry, dark cherry, and blackberry retain an invigorating, seed-like crunch and pit bitterness as they move from the nose to a palate that introduces tobacco; a medicinal expression of herbal essences; and savory salinity that makes for a memorably saliva-inducing persistence. I imagine that this cuvee, matured in half new barriques (but not noticeably so), will be worth following for at least the better part of a decade. Given Sleight of Hand's garish magic- and rock-themed labels, one might be tempted to imagine that winemaker Trey...

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2009 Sleight Of Hand The Magician

The 2009 The Magician is a blend of Gewurztraminer and Riesling fermented and raised in stainless steel. It displays aromas of lychee, pit fruits, cirrus, spring flowers, and mineral. Just off-dry with vibrant acidity and good balance, it will provide pleasant drinking over the next 12-18 months. Sleight of Hand Cellars began in 2007 coming out of the chute with some superb values, wines which are easy to spot on retail shelves because of their bright, magician-themed labels. Tel. (509) 386-6566; www.sofhcellars.com

- Jay S Miller (August, 2010)

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2009 Sleight Of Hand Red Wine The Spellbinder

The 2009 Spellbinder is a blend of 42% Cabernet Franc, 21% Cabernet Sauvignon, 14% Syrah, 12% Merlot, and 11% Sangiovese. Fragrant cherries, herbs, and spices lead to a savory, ripe, pleasure-bent red perfect for quaffing with pizza and burgers. This balanced, lengthy effort can be enjoyed over the next 4-5 years. Sleight of Hand Cellars began in 2007 coming out of the chute with some superb values, wines which are easy to spot on retail shelves because of their bright, magician-themed labels. There are two white wines among the current releases. Tel. (509) 386-6566; www.sofhcellars.com

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2009 Sleight Of Hand Chardonnay The Enchantress

The 2009 The Enchantress is 100% Chardonnay sourced from the French Creek Vineyard in Yakima Valley. It was barrel-fermented with native yeasts, put through malolactic fermentation, and aged in neutral oak for 11 months followed by bottling without fining or filtration. Pear, spiced apple, nutmeg, and mineral aromas lead to a well- balanced, spicy, intensely flavored Chardonnay that is likely to blossom for another 1-2 years. Drink this lengthy effort through 2017. Sleight of Hand Cellars began in 2007 coming out of the chute with some superb values, wines which are easy to spot on retail shelves because of their bright, magician-themed labels. There are two white wines among the current releases. Tel. (509) 386-6566; www.sofhcellars.com

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2009 Sleight Of Hand The Illusionist

Given 23 months in barrel (which explains why Busch elected to hold-off showing me the corresponding 2010 until next summer), Sleight of Hand's 2009 The Illusionist – sourced from Red MOUNTAIN Vineyards, Walla Walla's Blue Mountain Vineyard and Lewis Vineyard near Prosser; and mingling 27% Syrah and 8% Cabernet France with its Cabernet Sauvignon – was treated to 60% new barrels, the highest percentage in any of the wines I tasted from them on this occasion. Yet, I wasn't aware of the oak as such. Cassis and herbal essences, juniper berry and black pepper offer a pungent aromatic display, then team up with bitter dark chocolate, carob, and an undertone of crushed stone for an engagingly mouthwatering but metaphorically dark finish. This seamless, polished and powerfully expressive cuvee ought to be worth following for at least the better part of a decade...

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2009 Sleight Of Hand The Funkadelic Syrah

Bacon, sausage, sage, and diverse floral aromas in the nose of Sleight of Hand's Funk Vineyard 2009 Syrah Funkadelic point toward a kinship with Cote Rotie, while salt, mint and sage mouthwateringly and pungently inflect dark berries and smoked meat on an expansive, finely tannic, incessantly juicy palate. The fruit was foot-trodden here, incidentally This will leave you licking your lips and eager for the next sip. I suspect it will perform well for another half dozen years. Given Sleight of Hand's garish magic- and rock-themed labels, one might be tempted to imagine that winemaker Trey Busch and his partners, Jerry and Sandy Solomon – whom he met by chance in 2002 – have such a sense of whimsy, humor, and visual artistic sophistication that the ambitious pursuit of serious wine quality might be less of a focus. One taste reveals that such a...

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2009 Sleight Of Hand Chardonnay The Enchanter

The promising 2009 Chardonnay The Enchanter was tasted from a tank sample. It was fermented with native yeasts in seasoned French oak sur lie. Ripe and vibrant on the palate with flavors of melon, poached pear, and hazelnuts, it should prove to be outstanding as well as an excellent value once bottled. Sleight of Hand Cellars began in 2007 coming out of the chute with some superb values, wines which are easy to spot on retail shelves because of their bright, magician-themed labels. Tel. (509) 386-6566; www.sofhcellars.com

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