



2007 Petit Verdot

Vintage Summary

The 2007 growing season began with a cold, dry winter, resulting in an early budbreak. Spring remained dry and warm, providing a consistent climate for canopy growth. In early summer, the soils were depleted of their water holding capacity, naturally reducing yields by 30%. A mild, early summer eventually turned hot. Consistent temperatures in the mid 90's ripened fruit consistently throughout the harvest season.

Vineyard Practices

Aggressively pruning the vines helps focus the plants stored carbohydrates on promoting strong early growth in shoots. When shoots reach around 6 to 8 inches, we remove any growth not intentionally left at pruning. To help intensify color, ripen tannins and maintain healthy vines, we increased sun exposure and air circulation by removing laterals and creating a tunnel through the middle of the canopy. In May, we removed smaller fruit bearing shoots that might have had difficulty ripening their clusters to decrease production and increase fruit quality. In June, an early crop removal pass was done to balance out the unusual heavy crop load. The consistent summer provoked early veraison, and to ensure we had even maturity throughout the vineyard, we removed green or pink colored fruit. Yields of less than 3 tons per acre extended the growing season and we harvested most of the Cabernet Sauvignon from the middle of September through late October, depending on the micro-climate of the vineyard site.

Winemaking Practices

Our winemaking team began sampling the ripening grapes on a regular basis in early September. During the last few weeks before the grapes were picked, we tasted the skins, juice and seeds two to three times per week. We evaluated color, flavor and tannin ripeness to determine the exact harvest date. A skilled crew handpicked the grapes into ½ ton picking bins. Once at the winery, the clusters were hand sorted for consistency. After passing through our de-stemmer, berries dropped onto our modern sorting system, with both mechanical and hand sorting ensuring nothing green or under ripe was missed. The must (crushed grapes) was then placed in a stainless steel tank. UV-43 yeast, a strain known for its intense cherry and berry characteristics, then fermented the wine to dryness over a twelve-day period. During fermentation, the fermenting wine was pumped over for about 35 minutes twice daily to extract the ripe tannins and intense flavors from the skins. After fermentation, another two to three weeks of pump overs were needed to extract the intense complexity of Petit Verdot. Malolactic fermentation took place in barrel to incorporate the complex flavors. We blended the wine in mid July of 2008 to allow the wine to integrate for 9 months prior to bottling. The wine was aged for 18 months in 30% new French oak.

Tasting Notes

Our 2007 Petit Verdot has a bright vibrant color with a nice crimson rim. Minerality and earth dominate the forefront on the nose, combing wet stone, slate, mushroom with a shade of raspberry. An entry driven by the great acidity of Petit Verdot is complimented by a touch of red fruit, blackberry and nuances of coffee and spice. The mid palate evolves into a finish with perceptible tannins, showing the true characteristics of this unique variety.

Specifics

Barrel aging: 18 months in 225-L oak barrels, 30% new
Barrel replacement: 20-30% annually on average
Racking; every 6 months
Fining: none
Filtering: none
Bottled: April 18, 2009
pH: 3.65
Alcohol: 13.5%
Barrels: Allier, Nevers
Yeasts: UV-43
Suggested Retail Price: \$30

Blended: 7/28, 2007
Harvest dates: 10/17, 2007
Brix at Harvest: 24.5
Harvest method: 100% hand-harvested
Fermentation: 12 to 15 days with UV-43
Maceration: 18 to 35 days including fermentation
Total Acidity: 0.74 g/100ml
Pump overs: 2 to 4 times daily during fermentation
Malolactic fermentation: in barrel