



2006 Syrah

Vintage Summary

2006 began with consistent rain and cool weather. The vines, tired from the heavy 2005 harvest, awakened in early May with unusual warm weather for late spring. May, June and July averaged a high of 78 degrees. August and September lingered in the 85-degree range, helping achieve bright, ripe fruit character without picking based on concerns of too much sugar and high alcohol.

Vineyard Practices

Aggressively pruning the vines helps focus the plants stored carbohydrates on promoting strong early growth in shoots. In June, shoots were around 6 to 8 inches, and we removed 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 June, the crop was reduced down to 1 cluster per shoot, minimizing yields to help maintain acidity and balanced ripening. Syrah clusters tend to be large and have shoulders or wings. Prior to veraison, we removed these shoulders and wings to ensure we had even maturity throughout the vineyard. The moderate, consistent temperatures allowed us to pick in late September through the middle of October.

Winemaking Practices

A skilled crew handpicked the grapes into ½ ton picking bins. Once at the winery, our crusher-destemmer removed all of the stems and lightly crushed the grapes. The must (crushed grapes) was then placed in a stainless steel tank. The grape juice was cold soaked for 48 hours to help intensify color and phenolics. UV-43 yeast, a strain known for its intense gamy and spicy and characteristics, fermented the wine to dryness over a twelve-day period. During fermentation, the Syrah was pumped over twice per day for 45 minutes. We aerated the wine to expose it to oxygen throughout the fermentation. This helps reduction of Hydrogen Sulfide (rotten egg aromas), and helps fixate color. After the wine finished fermentation we continued pump overs for another two weeks. Malo-lactic fermentation took place in barrel to help integrate the 33% new oak (18% new American, 15% new French).

Tasting Notes

Inky black with a light maroon rim, our 2006 Syrah is rich in flavor and depth. The nose has layers of black currant, pepper, wet stone and overtones of bacon fat and smoke. The palate is soft upon entry, yielding flavors of spice, cassis, dark fruit and evolving into a weighty mid plate elegantly finished with a touch of French oak. The finish of this 100% Syrah is soft, lengthy, and enriched with supple, elegant tannins.

Specifics

Barrel aging:	18 months in 225-L oak barrels, 33% new	
Blended:	7/11-7/13 2007	Barrel replacement: 20-30% annually on average
Harvest dates:	9/26-10/14, 2005	Racking; every 6 months
Brix at Harvest:	26.2	Fining: none
Harvest method:	100% hand-harvested	Filtering: none
Fermentation:	12 days with UV-43	Bottled: May 7-9, 2008
Maceration:	21-24 days including fermentation	pH: 3.72
Total Acidity:	0.71 g/100ml	Alcohol: 15%
Pump overs:	2 times daily during fermentation	Barrels: Allier, Never, Minnesota
Yeasts:	UV-43	