



2004 Syrah

Vintage Summary

The 2004 vintage began with relatively low rainfall. Dry soils and a warm February resulted in an early bud break. Spring generated ideal weather, limiting heat spikes and allowing vines to produce full, dense canopies. In early June, we removed laterals and selective leaves to manipulate the canopy, and allow filtered light to penetrate the clusters. The warmest summer since 1997 produced consecutive months of 90-degree temperatures. Veraison came early and was very even, allowing us to drop any discolored or green fruit left prior to harvest. August was nearly perfect, with only one day jumping above 100 degrees. September remained generally warm, providing a perfect climate for harvesting ripe fruit while still maintaining natural acidity.

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. 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. Each shoot was reduced down to one cluster, knowing that Syrah grapes pH and acid levels correspond with crop load. The warm, consistent temperatures allowed us to pick in early September.

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 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 the 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 18% new American Oak.

Tasting Notes

Dark purple in color with a violet edge, this 2004 Syrah screams complexity and depth. The nose is rich with bright, ripe fruit encompassed by toasted oak and some smoky, spicy characters. The palate is soft upon entry, with layers of dark fruit, cherry, and a hint of gamey character to let your taste buds know you are tasting 100% Syrah. The finish is soft, lengthy, and enriched with supple, elegant tannins.

Specifics

Barrel aging: 18 months in 225-L oak barrels, 8% new

Blended: 6/18-6/19, 2005

Harvest dates: 9/23-9/26, 2004

Brix at Harvest: 25.9

Harvest method: 100% hand-harvested

Fermentation: 12 days with UV-43

Maceration: 12 to 24 days including fermentation

Total Acidity: .71 g/100ml

Pump overs: 2 times daily during fermentation

Yeasts: UV-43

Barrel replacement: 20-30% annually on average

Racking: every 3 months

Fining: none

Filtering: none

Bottled: May 2-3, 2006

pH: 3.78

Alcohol: 15.0%

Barrels: Minnesota