



2005 Reserve Cabernet Sauvignon

Vintage Summary

The 2005 vintage began with heavily moisturized soils as the result of an extremely wet winter. Early spring remained cool and wet, providing vines with all the water necessary to promote a strong, well developed canopy. Crop loads were up to 25% higher than normal. July and August temperatures lingered in the mid 90's, allowing healthy canopies to absorb the consistent heat and bring veraison quickly. Fall maintained healthy, moderate temperatures around the 88-degree range, allowing the wines to develop phenolics while still maintaining acidity. A quick heat spike in late October provided the necessary degree-days to push the last of the grapes to proper maturity levels.

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 warm 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 October through early November, 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, 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. UV-43 yeast, a strain known for its intense cherry and berry characteristics, then fermented the wine to dryness over a ten-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 slower releasing tannins found in Cabernet Sauvignon. Malolactic fermentation took place in barrel to incorporate the complex flavors. We blended the wine in mid August of 2006 to allow the wine to integrate for 9 months prior to bottling. The wine was aged for 20 months in 100% French oak (50% New).

Tasting Notes

Made from 100% Cabernet Sauvignon, this wine shows what Paso Robles Cabernet is all about. Inky black in color with a bright red rim, the nose of the wine smells of true Cabernet. Black fruit, leather, pencil lead and a slight caramel tone make up the nose of this wine. The entry is soft and supple, followed by a mid palate combining flavor and power. Flavors of black currant, plumb, and light raspberry tones overcoat a mineral character that screams complexity. The finish subtle, yet powerful, and delicately influenced by the multi layers of soft, integrated French oak.