



2006 Petit Verdot

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. Yields of 1 ton per acre allowed us to harvest October 2nd.

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, 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 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 2007 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 2006 Petit Verdot is dark purple with a crimson hue. A slight mineral component makes up the forefront on the nose, followed by black fruit and a touch of earthiness. A soft, fruit forward entry is accented by a touch of slate, blackberry and nuances of caramel and coffee. The mid palate balances acidity and structure 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
Blended:	7/28, 2007	Racking:	every 6 months
Harvest dates:	10/2, 2006	Fining:	none
Brix at Harvest:	24.8	Filtering:	none
Harvest method:	100% hand-harvested	Bottled:	April 18, 2008
Fermentation:	12 to 15 days with UV-43	pH:	3.70
Maceration:	18 to 35 days including fermentation	Alcohol:	13.8%
Total Acidity:	.70 g/100ml	Barrels:	Allier, Nevers
Pump overs:	2 to 4 times daily during fermentation	Yeasts:	UV-43
Malolactic fermentation:	in barrel		